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A SONG OF REPENTANCE

By Austin Clarke

When I was younger than the soul
That wakes me now at night, I saw
The mortal mind in such a glory,
All knowledge was in Connaught.
I crossed the narrows of earthward light,
The rain, noon-set along the mountain,
And I forgot the scale of thought,
Man's lamentation, Judgement hour
That hides the sun in the waters.

But as I stumbled to the flint
Where blessed Patric drove a crowd
Of fiends that roared like cattlemen
Until they stamped themselves out
Between the fiery pens, I felt
Repentance gushing from the rock.
For I had made a bad confession
Once, feared to name in ugly box
The growing pains of flesh.

I count the sorrowful mysteries
Of earth before the celebrant
Has turned to wash his mouth in wine.
The soul's confined to a holy vessel,
And intellect less than desire.
O I will stay to the last gospel
Cupping my heart with prayer :
Knuckle and knee are all we know
When the mind is half despairing.

No story handed down in Connaught
 Can cheat a man at thirty-seven,
 Keep the fire in, turn the head
 From thinking of that book in Heaven.
 Could I unbutton mad thought, quick-save
 My skin, if I were caught at last
 Without my soul and dragged to torment,
 Ear-drumming in that dreadful place,
 Where the sun hides in the waters ?

TWO POEMS

By Padraic Fallon

WISDOM.

Who'd love again on this old rambling star
 Where love, cast out of God's harem,
 Grows coarse in the weather over a gypsy fire
 Of stick and cowdung ? Who, having come to sense,
 Tenting with her but comes to know
 As mere illusions
 These dark eyes heavy with dream
 Of lost kingdoms,
 The sound of strings and drums
 She carries about her soft in the air as echo ?
 Having won at length to wisdom, who'd wish to know
 Once more an empty fallen queen of Pharaoh ?

Bear with me then ; I, that was hunter once,
 Guess rightly that you have as many dewy
 Turnings as a hare ; but having come to sense
 I know the glittering ancient self in you
 Is not for dog and horn. So you may stay
 As a sitting hare in the dew
 Quietly assembling the moon in each cold eye
 Unless in folly I find
 Like Solomon a second wind
 And on this falling star seek more than a dog's day,
 Running with that old stager who lived and died in
 the faith
 That the crown of love is . . . to be in at the death.

THE BURTHEN.

I carry soul upon my back
 And think it strange so light a bubble,
 So cold and wonderful a pack,
 Can weigh the mind down with such trouble
 That I've no peace by night or day
 Thinking it may blow away
 To be caught on a hedge-top
 For a puck-goat to gobble up.

I might have peace if I could hide
 Its dazzle in a beggar's pack;
 But light leaks out at every stride:
 And staggering on my starry track
 My enemies the wind and the sky
 Harry me with tooth and cry
 The moon with the cold pack of the sea
 Hunts me with horns jealously.

Yet when the moon kennels her pale
 Sea hounds and the sky sleeps and the wind
 Cushions his silver snout on his tail
 At Orien's half-door I cannot find
 Ease nor peace for my father comes
 From the grave to plague me with passionate dreams
 Of women he won or lost
 As if it were I not he were the ghost.

Though I've cursed that ghost who wasted his wits
 Like candles that he might see his thin,
 Dark, preying face in every sluts'
 Wandering eyes, he enters my skin
 And uses me nightly in spite of the priest
 In dreaming of a woman tamed on the fist
 Like a golden hawk. I pray that God
 Keep that old scoundrel under the sod.

May God wring his neck ! Lately I've thought
 That his birdwomen weigh more in my mind
 Than the lents of the priests or the glittering, light
 Burthen I've carried from sky and wind ;
 God wring his neck ere my fancy fall
 So utterly on them that I throw soul
 To the squinting goats on hedge or rock
 And follow them crowing, like a rich cock.

STANDING WATERS

By J. Redwood Anderson

THE DRINKING POOL

Not here the joy of water nor its wrath.
 This is no rivulet that the glade's peace
 nurses in its clear cradle, where the sun,
 like a young father innocently glad,
 laughs at his child, and the maternal grass
 sends up the joyous blossoms of her hope
 to keep sweet watch upon him ; nor the stream
 that in the bright impatience of his youth
 shouts as he goes, waking the merry glens
 to answering jollity ; nor the low song
 of happy rivers, where the plains, all day,
 listen, and all night long under the stars.
 Not here the joy of water . . . nor its wrath :
 Never a thought of ocean and its storms,
 fast-running tides and waves, where from their crests
 the grey gale whips the spinning foam away,
 desperate billows gathering all their rage,
 all their remorse, into a towering hate
 that turns upon itself to fall and break
 and in wild tears dissolve ; never a thought
 of tragic oceans visits the mind of him
 who sees it in his lonely walk—this pool—

if he indeed should see it, and not, rather,
 pass by unheeding. For what is there to see?
 A pool in the far corner of a field,
 backed on two sides by a brown bramble-hedge
 bare in this early Spring, its nearer margin
 stamped by the hooves of cattle to black mud.
 There, like a stranger in a foreign land,
 it shrinks from recognition—and, for sole
 neighbours, a willow-tree naked of leaf,
 in whose lean branches the uneasy wind
 moves with a voice of old complaint; and, there,
 in the field's opposite corner, a slouched rick,
 like an abandoned hovel. What is this
 to take the notice of the passer-by,
 busied with his own cares? And yet this pool
 has consolations and its own meek store
 of loveliness: Does not the dawn's quick ear
 surprise its gentle orisons? the sun
 find his bright image in its constant eye?
 and all the changing lights of day dwell there
 with the white passage of the silent clouds?
 Yes, and at night, faint in a cloudless night,
 its heart receives within it, like a vision
 seen in the pause of ecstasy, the hushed
 mystery of the total universe,
 star upon star forever; while heaven itself
 refreshes it with the abundant rains.
 For it is one of those whose beauty lies
 neither in joy nor passion: day by day
 it leads its life of patient charity—
 see, at its edge, the marks of many feet
 where thirsty cattle stooped to drink! Not here,
 River or Sea, God's mighty ministers—
 and yet, as one hath said, "They also serve."

THE TARN

Down in the valley not a bird-note calls,
 and on the barren mountain-top only
 the harsh voice of the wind speaks in the dark ;
 the lamentable wind in the thin grasses
 blowing, and crying round the lonely rocks.
 But in this hollow, on the highest ridge,
 comes through the darkness the perpetual lap
 of little herded companies of waves
 on the rough shingle—the whispering of those
 who crowd together waiting. Not a lamp
 in village or on road ; the earth's deep bulk
 invisible ; in the sky nor moon nor star :
 black night—and through the night only the sounds
 of wind and little waves that wait the dawn.

Then, far away, the morning's cold approach :
 a long incision of grey steel, staining
 slowly to red. But all the valley still
 is covered with deep darkness, and no bird
 preludes upon his bough. Only the shapes
 of the vague mountain-summits gradually
 make known their presence, not as things of earth
 but part of the vague world of cloud. And then,
 suddenly, the tarn, with a swift gesture,
 has gathered all the feeble light of dawn
 into a hushed embrace : before the earth
 wakens or air puts on her coloured shifts,
 water has flashed his welcome to the day ;
 the tarn that, all night long, waited—a crowd
 of little herded waves whispering together
 their faith and expectation, all night long.

THREE POEMS

By Patrick Kavanagh

THE CHASE

I followed Wisdom
 A night and a night
 And a day and a day
 Clay-knowing to spite.

I went quickly
 As gulls over fallow,
 As goats among crags,
 As winds through a hollow.

Yet never I
 Caught up with slow-footed
 Wisdom who took
 The lanes deepest rutted.

She left me with
 My gangster ambition
 In remorse—and remorse
 To the Devil's contrition.

THE HOUR

Now is the clock hour
 The triumphant stroke
 Struck. This is the inexorable.
 This rubber-band life
 Is stretched to violin sweetness

Beware! If the gong clangs
 On your passivity
 Narrow despair is a grinning
 Mandarin

Now is desirable
 Achieving ready sensuous to embrace,
 The hills marshal furrows
 Soldierly. A marching tune is played

O children !
 Now have we borne the exultant
 Hood on our shoulders.
 Who will be the defeated after ?

MORNING

Do not awake the academic scholars,
 Tradition's hairy god last night departed
 This morn the huge iconoclastic rollers
 Blot out the roads where long the Spirit carted
 The prayerful dream, the scientific load,
 The cobwebbed preacher-stuff of Portobello
 To-day will find a new straw-bodied god
 Much brighter than the other morbid fellow.

And when they wake—the scholars—they will be
 Toothless unvoiced, and maybe half-way gone,
 With nothing but a clouded memory
 To lead them to the hieroglyphic stone
 On which old Scholarship had proudly scratched
 A list of doors that Truth has left unlatched.

THE GALL OF HUMAN KINDNESS

By Vincent O'Sullivan

A BOOK which was published with considerable success at the beginning of this year adds a new figure, and not the least pathetic, to the martyrology of literature.* Here we have the story of a man born to live in the clear air of the summits, with a natural disposition to fresh air, fresh water, and the company of friends, driven into dark corners, passing his days in expedients and quarrels, reduced to depend for the very necessities of life on the capricious generosity of temporary friends ; all because he imagined he could wrest a living out of the miserable writing profession—if that can be called a profession where there is no security, so many go-betweens, where the printer, the binder, the paper-maker must be paid, where the publisher assures himself of a profit he deems adequate, and value depends on opinion. Probably two things, love and the gifts of the spirit, should never be brought to market.

Certain it is that as authorship tended to be organized as a profession the tragedies connected with it may be said to have begun. Voltaire did not live by his writings ; he lived, and very comfortably, because of his writings. Rousseau did likewise. With all his independence and tendency to insult his benefactors, who took the matter, be it said in passing, much more good-humoredly than the "benefactors" of him dealt with here, he had to depend on what his admirers were willing to do for him, and did so depend, amid suspicions and quarrels, passing from one to another till the end. Those inclined to be shocked at the tone of some letters of Corvo-Rolfe and to exclaim at his ingratitude and the rest of it, might take a look at the letters of Rousseau and see the Englishman, a tiny figure in comparison, beaten to a stand-still.

In France, literature was organized as a profession about the time of the foundation by Buloz of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. Then began the tragedies. The shore of the French nineteenth century, to keep to that, is strewn with the hope-freighted wrecks of Gérard de Nerval, Aloysius Bertrand, Petrus Borel, Gustave Planche, Hegesippe Moreau, Baudelaire, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam,

* *The Quest for Corvo*, by A. J. A. Symons. (Cassell and Co. 1934).

Barbey d'Aureville, Verlaine, down to the other day. What a dismal book is the *Life of Marcelline Desbordes-Valmore*! Béranger, owing to the popularity of his songs and money from other sources, had no cares; Alfred de Musset, worth a hundred of him, was often "broke." All these people reacted to their situation according to their temperament. Even George Sand, who had a sure public and a certain income from a country estate, wrote two or three letters to Buloz about money which render pale the letters of Corvo-Rolfe, and even of Rousseau.

Mr. Symons, who has written the biography of Corvo-Rolfe, tries to keep up his spirits before the divagations of his subject. Towards the end he shews signs of fatigue, and more willingly adopts the views of an ordinary suspicious citizen when considering a case of prolonged failure, where the man is driven to borrow by any means possible to keep alive. If ever a man was in that state it was the unfortunate hero of *The Quest for Corvo*. He even came down to begging for five pounds, says Mr. Symons, who gives a heartbreaking list of the earnings of Rolfe as a writer. Twenty pounds for this, thirty pounds for that, and for the one book which has carried his name to any locality deserving the epithet "Public," nothing at all. Mr. Symons seems to mean well by poor Rolfe, to sympathize with the forlorn, generally starved, near-saint. But the result is full of sorrow. Here and there is an unpleasant reminder of the pious men of the newspapers when they are indignant with overflowing virtue and out to present somebody at his worst. He writes with a bourgeois scepticism of Rolfe's pictures of his misery, taking them to be stale and "the usual thing"—calculated attacks on the purse *via* the heart. If a life in Hell is the usual thing, they are surely that.

A rather wide acquaintance with the writings produced by the misery of artists promotes the conviction that the element of sameness which pervades them all has its origin in the fact that such situations must work out more or less alike in their main lines. Mr. Symons and others like him see the business in a state of generality quite abstract. It is perhaps natural to think that if a desperate appeal is not followed quickly by a dramatic event the appeal was exaggerated, and when a new appeal comes the recipient has a feeling that he is being duped. Such was the experience of Baudelaire, whose last years in exile at Brussels were not unlike the last years of Rolfe at Venice.

Richard Wagner, who till near the end of his life lived, so to speak, by private subscription, and on a scale that makes the total sums accorded to Baudelaire and Rolfe together appear as the salary of a junior clerk in Rothschild's bank to the fortune of his employers, sent out appeals essentially the same, though they have an air more imposing, both from the importance of the sums demanded and the scenery amid which they were often written. If Wagner was often penniless, he had a miraculous knack of escaping the tenth-rate lodgings and squalid hotels in which the gorgeous dreams of a Poe, a Baudelaire, a Villiers de l'Isle-Adam unrolled their pageantry, and the passionate visions of Dostoevsky worked out their plan. To think of the benefit which Mozart and Schubert have conferred on humanity, and then to think how they were dealt with by the human-kind, swindled and exploited by publishers, insulted and discouraged, till their fine lucid souls drooped and failed in their wretched famished bodies, should induce to a charitable interpretation of the sorrows of this or that musicaster, poetaster, dauber of paint. But it does not, and the life of Corvo-Rolfe is there to prove it.

The main complaint running through the book is that he was ungrateful. Some cannot be grateful. It sticks in their gullet. The wise don't expect gratitude. Aubrey Beardsley, who, it is shameful to think, had often to ask his friends for aid, and was in fact in receipt of a pension which seemed to be regularly paid, went so far as to say to me that it was impossible to be grateful in such cases, and that if gratitude were expressed it could not be sincere. Was Hazlitt grateful? Coleridge did now and again give expression to something that looked like gratitude in smarmy canting phrases which disgusted Carlyle, and were, I suppose, only half real.

But those who want to be instructed on the subject have full material in the *Journals* of Léon Bloy. Here we are on common ground with Rolfe, for both professed devout Catholicism, and both were at war with most of their fellow-religionists. As a man Bloy was not in the least like Rolfe, who was in character more akin to Leigh Hunt. Hunt is known to most of those who know him at all by his *Autobiography*, written when he was eighty in a spirit of good-will to all mankind, not excepting those with whom he had the afflicting money transactions which studded his long life. But even then, when all was over, he

could not bring himself to speak really well of Byron. He could take £1,500 from Shelley and still regard Shelley as his dearest friend. But against Byron who invited him to Italy, housed not only himself but his unpleasant wife and squalling children, and kept the whole family going for some time, he conceived and harboured a grievance, and took his revenge in a book called "Lord Byron and his Contemporaries" which is far enough from the benign accents of the Autobiography. All that is quite in the Rolfe method, in the Léon Bloy method too. Both retained a kindly remembrance for a few of their benefactors, Bloy more than the other. Against Termier, Maritain, Martineau, Bloy's hand was never raised, nor was Rolfe's against that President of Jesus College, Oxford, who was the man who could manage him best because he understood him best and calmly brushed away as dust on a sword-blade squalid rumours, discreditable stories, idle gossip. "I like Rolfe," he said quietly and finally, and that settled it.

Bloy, like Rolfe, was a prodigious worker. The titles of his printed works cover a page of a magazine. When he was not labouring on one of them he would copy in a script, even more patient and beautiful than Rolfe's, prayers, incantations, canticles, or, taken in a mystical dream, design and illuminate the Chalice of the Grail, or the vestments and implements of the Mass for All Saints' Day. Then he would seize his bludgeon and sally forth to have a whack at his enemies.

What enemies he had! Insignificant and mean in comparison seem the enemies of Rolfe. But then, in comparison with Bloy, Rolfe himself seems, not mean, but mostly insignificant. Bloy was a great writer; he had a great utterance. He had ideas about the contemporary world and about man's fate in it. The value of these ideas is disputable; but they are there, they have influenced many, they are prized not only in Catholic circles. Bloy called himself "The Pilgrim of the Absolute." He also called himself "The Ungrateful Beggar-Man." In these two phrases is the programme of his existence. Far from feeling shame at himself for holding out his hand, his shame was reserved for those who did not fill it. Since alms-giving is a means to save the soul alive, and has also an excellent effect on the health and spirits by giving people an opportunity to attain worthy ends, it was he really who was the benefactor.

With Rolfe it was different. He originated in a highly respectable middle-class family in business in the City of London since the Eighteenth century, and it revolted all his inherited traditions to be "an object of charity." He refers to this many times in his letters. He does not want, he says, to be a "sponger"; what he wants is work which will enable him to live with a minimum of decent circumstances. But his writings were either mismanaged or really unsaleable; his paintings with their Blake-like note inspired no dealer or patron; other kind of work, "jobs," came only by fits and starts; and at last he must depend on the unrequited gift of money. He took it—he was obliged to take it, but each time it was as though he had received a buffet. That explains why he responded so abruptly and churlishly. He was raw with a wound to a kind of self-respect which Bloy, for instance, if he had understood it, would have despised. The money came with reluctance, often with advice and upbraiding, hardly ever graciously. A Scotch lady, in receipt of a stipend which never arrived unaccompanied by a grumble, used to say cheerfully: "You can't expect to get that sort of money without some dirt on it." But had the dirt been scraped off, this would not have satisfied Rolfe; he desired it to come wrapped in gold-leaf. It is thus no doubt that he would have presented it himself if he had ever had any money to give.

It is lamentable that money has such power to create suffering, humiliation, all manner of misunderstandings. But so it is, and there is no help for it. So it is as well in U.R.S.S. set up to destroy the inequalities created by money, as in any European provincial town. Just as there are in France *enterrements de troisieme classe*, and even, what beats all! *Messes des Pauvres*—for before God at least, one would have thought, the poor and the rich, once dead, might be at last on terms of equality,—so there are *biographies des Pauvres*. Quite otherwise would Mr. Symons have—not so much composed as attuned a biography of Bennett, Galsworthy, George Moore, Edgar Wallace, who left considerable fortunes. Not only would the events have been presented in a less cruel light, but the attitude would be different. You need only recall the difference in the biographical treatment of Poe and Hawthorne. Then again, low motives can be ascribed to the poor man, for he is a potential criminal; or, at any rate, the condition of poverty must lead to expedients and stark places

on the life-chart. So you get, as Mr. Symons does, as some biographers of Wilde and Verlaine have done, the figure of the scoundrel who was yet a great artist. It is so much more interesting, and what is not to be neglected, more saleable by far. A life of Verlaine published last year in Paris makes this life of Corvo-Rolfe even as a spelling-book for a kindergarten. There were protests in some quarters, and uncomplimentary things were said about the author. It had a large sale.

2

But you will ask, Who *was* this Corvo-Rolfe whose name we have never heard before this day? Great scoundrel and great artist?

Personally, I think he was neither. Rather, a saint without patience. There have been such. True, Mr. Symons offers at the outset a darkling version of a letter said to have been sent by his hero to "a sensualist of London" (hey, that sounds encouraging!), which seems to be a sort of "Guide to the Pleasures of Venice" (110th edition). But who knows what Rolfe had in mind? Perhaps he meant, when he offered to shew the town, to shame and reform the Sensualist of London, even as Carlyle, performing a similar office for Emerson, shouted at each emergence from a disorderly house: "Man, do you believe in Hell the noo?" What remains in the property-room for the make-up of Rolfe as a scoundrel has not even the value of "Chatter about Harriet." Nothing but variations on the entanglements about money which have beset the penniless since money appeared in the world.

See now what woes the scholar's life assail,
Pride, envy, want, the patron and the gaol.

Of Pride he had more than enough. He had too high an opinion of his own gifts to be Envious. Want he knew, and if not the Patron, the Publisher. The Gaol he escaped, but not the Gaol's half-sister, the Pauper-Hospital. And with that, a self-lacerating rage inflamed by an ever-present consciousness of his own value which had never received its just reward from those who had used him. But his temper was better than he deemed it; his vengeance, which he thought so deadly, crazy and ridiculous posturings which harmed only himself. Solitary

as he was, these "vengeances" had to be conducted by letter. Had it been otherwise they never would have been heard of; for he was a man of the stiletto, cloak, and slouched sombrero alone in his room, but disarmed and yielding if it came to personal contact—not certainly from fear, but from an innate aristocracy of soul which caused him to regard all wrangling about interest, all bargaining, as essentially degrading and a harm to the spirit. Modigliani, the painter, who has come these years to a tardy renown, was like that. Needless to say he was poor, that he wasted his time, that he had all the vices which moralists reprove. One night in a café he heard a tale of misery from a young artist whom he knew very little. Surreptitiously he dropped a hundred francs note—all he had—on the floor. Then he said he had an engagement and rose to go. "Hullo," he said, carelessly touching the note with his shoe, "somebody has dropped money here." And with that he departed. One bitterly cold afternoon he was standing on a "rest" in the middle of the roadway waiting for the traffic to pass when there came beside him an old painter fallen on evil days. The old man was scarcely covered and shuddering with cold. "I don't know how it is," said Modigliani, "but I am most uncomfortable in this overcoat. It's too tight; it weighs me down. If it fits you, please take it and never let me see it again." For a month afterwards Modigliani was seen about in a summer suit without an overcoat. It was better for his health, he said.

Mr. Symons tells us no such pleasant stories about Rolfe. But no more than Modigliani was Rolfe a man to talk of such things.

3

Frederick William Rolfe was born in the heart of London—Cheapside, where his family had held for some generations a warehouse for pianos. Seeing the business his family was engaged in, it is not too fanciful to suppose that his parents named their first-born after some German musician or royal patron of music, the combination of names being Germanic. At an age rather earlier than is customary in well-to-do families, he went forth to an independent existence, and found employment as a school-master. In 1886 he was baptized into the Roman Catholic

Church, a step which though it must often have afforded him many intimate consolations was, viewed from the outside, perhaps the most unlucky act of an unlucky life, for among Catholics he seems to have found more enemies than friends—some of then relentless enemies who stopped at nothing to ruin him. For the details the reader should address himself to Mr. Symons, and for all other details of a life which ended by starvation in Venice. In a small room, alone as he had lived, Frederick William Rolfe of London was found lying dead, abandoned by all.

Out of this material Mr. Symons has made a book which, if painful, is almost all through interesting. But it must be to Mr. Symon's skill that the interest is due, for the life, taken in its elements, is as devoid of salient points as Jane Austen's. Rolfe was in fact an obscure Englishman among millions of his countryfolk, and not even *Hadrian the Seventh*, the one book of his which had a little movement, served to lift him at all above the general population. He himself, I am convinced, very imperfectly realized his own life. Save when he was actually without food and bed, a condition which happened too often, he saw himself as a cardinal-diplomat, what he had always dreamed of being.

So obscure has he remained, so indifferent were all that had ever had anything to do with them about his books, that Mr. Symons had to compose his biography piecemeal, finding an acquaintance here, a letter there, a painting or photograph some where else ; and he spent eight long years on the business. He has worked *in corpore vili*. It is not surprising to learn that the very few who have a kind feeling left for poor Rolfe were rather unnerved at such a dissection. It seems that Rolfe's brother objected. Mr. Symons, like M. Porché, the author of the Life of Verlaine already mentioned, says that his artistic conscience would not allow him to take the protests of the family into consideration. Opinions will differ. Certainly, by following his own course he has made a better book from the point of view of sales than if he had confined himself mainly to considerations guided by reticence. If there be people who like seeing a man frizzle on a grill, like shrieks of the damned in the pit, and are curious as to the behaviour of the damned in the pit, here they are served even to satiety.

There is in the book a photograph of Rolfe taken near the

end of his life, when hardship, anxiety, and slander, and the illnesses incident to such afflictions, had done their worst. Well, it is a cheerful, handsome, and, one would say, *contented* face. Many a man who has been a success from the start has a furtive, lowering, mean and haggard look that the face of this poor man who never had a day's luck has not at all. He was over fifty; he looks barely forty. Looking at this photograph one understands how all liked him at first, and some all the time. Here is no trace of the writer of laborious missives with their artificial insults and sarcasm and pathological invective. The trim unhumbled set of the shoulders and head recall the portraits of Poe in his last year. But Poe's face bears the story of his disaster; it is the ravaged face of a man who was not born for success and is now defeated. What melancholy looks out of the great eyes! There is no trace of melancholy in Rolfe's face, and I don't believe he knew what melancholy is. Poe's face is haunted, it is the face of a man who lives in fear—fear of hallucinations, and also of all that surrounds him. Rolfe apparently feared nothing, neither on this earth nor beyond its rim. People made advances to him, not he to them. If some of these people got their fingers squeezed, or thought they did, it was themselves that began it. Rolfe generally rebuffed admirers. He gave them warning to sheer off. If they persisted, as the Rev. Benson did, in forcing their acquaintance on him, the consequences, which after all were never very dreadful, should be on their own heads.

Rolfe, *not* his friends and admirers, got the rough end of the stick all through. *They* had the advantage of position, because he always was in need of something. Then would come a time when they became to him as tombstones, and he would fling himself blindly against them at no matter what cost to himself. At these times, as Mr. Symons says, he was no longer in his right mind. His biographer thinks that a scurrilous attack, printed in a Scotch newspaper while Rolfe was still a young man, did some injury to his brain from which he never recovered, and was thus the cause of his subsequent strangenesses. That is also my opinion. Certainly this attack on Rolfe, vile as it was and meant to injure his person, his reputation, to wound his feelings and misrepresent his acts, appears nevertheless as little, in respect both to voltage and to the platform from which it was slung, when compared to the attacks sustained, for instance,

by Hazlitt in England and by Léon Bloy in France. On Bloy they seemed to have only the infuriating effect of the darts which are flung at the bull in a bull-fight; but Hazlitt, though a born fighter and built of harder material than Rolfe, acknowledged that they had hurt his mind. Needless to say the attacks on Hazlitt came from persons and quarters otherwise important than an anonymous assailant in a local Scotch paper. It may be said indeed that without the aid of Rolfe's friends, the English Roman Catholics, who shewed their understanding of the Gospel of Charity by reprinting the Scotch attack in one or two of their diocesan papers, the result would have been null. Even as it was, the effect must have been slight; for what was the attack, after all, but an anonymous screed written by one obscure man against another to satisfy some private vengeance and with the aim of preventing the victim from earning his living? To most readers who glanced through the article in Aberdeen or in the dioceses, it must have seemed about as interesting as an account of two gangsters fighting over nefarious sums in a dark corner. An hour after, how many remember the name of the gangster that was downed?

But these things have the importance given them by the one accused. Rolfe, who could never have had much worldly wisdom, was subject to pass from the little he had into a delirium which transfigured the realm of England into a vast gossip-hall resounding mainly with discussion of him and his deserts. The uncontrolled truth that to most people their own ambitions seem much too important to leave room for any long dwelling on the affairs of others, never found an entry into his skull. Such good sense as he had—and on too rare occasions he shewed good sense, mostly, it is true, directed on other people—was that sane intuition sometimes found in saints, especially in the East, the fruit of abstinence, deprivation, and solitude.

Where he was more than half-crazy was in his letters of threat. He had a foolish notion of the power of the pen—of his own anyway. He thought he had only to write a letter to blast and pillory a man for ever. These letters were as apart from himself as his painting. He would sacrifice the most obvious self-interest to the satisfaction of writing one. Down he would sit to elaborate it with the cool satisfaction of an artillery officer directing the fire of a gun. He would write to a man he wanted

to bring round to his point of view what he had done as reprisals to some other man, never dreaming that the person he was writing to in order to denounce this one or that, would disapprove his methods and take the other side. A good example is the case of the Rev. Hugh Benson, against whom Rolfe had grievances which his biographer thinks justified. But Rolfe's way of getting his own back was to write a letter denouncing this priest, a convert to Catholicism, to the bishop owning his obedience. To Rolfe it never occurred that the English Roman Catholics would sacrifice a thousand Rolfes to such a gilt-edged haul as Benson. What indeed would a Rolfe weigh for purposes of propaganda against a son of an Archbishop of Canterbury?

O Sancta simplicitas! Most of his quarrels had the same proportion. In one he breathed blood and fire because his opponent disputed his version of a Greek author. Try as he will, Mr. Symons cannot make us accept such a man as a sinister and picturesque scoundrel, a Stavisky in a cassock. That Rolfe was not a scoundrel, picturesque or sinister, or any other variety, I know well. I know it by what Charles Maurras calls the movement of the nature of things. Rather was he a saint, for those who know of what sanctity really consists. It were hard to find a man of more aseptic cleanliness outside and in. *Acesis*. He never had much to give, but what he had he gave as one to whom the goods of this world were as dross. Perhaps the root of his misfortunes was that his own virtues he imputed to others, and died with shame when he did not find them. Yes, I know, it is unpleasant if you are a successful business-man with a family at the seaside—say, a publisher—to have a needy fellow come along who demands almost as a right those loose notes in your pocket which you intend to dispense on a evening with the lovely Mrs. Tickler. Such a man cannot be a *good* man. May I not say—as Woodrow Wilson used to put it—that he is a *bad* man—a scoundrel? Alas, no, you may not say it on the known facts, however fine a placard it makes to put at the door:—Great scoundrel—great writer.

4

But does Rolfe deserve this second label any more than the first? Here the tests are different and derive their activity not from "the movement of the nature of things," but merely from

personal taste. There are some, and among them his biographer, who put him among the greatest. According to them, he was *non tam impar quam dispar*. The title of only one of his books is at all known. I myself knew no other of his writings, apart from a few stories published in *The Yellow Book*, till I read of them lately in Mr. Symons' book. *Hadrian the Seventh* was published before the war and brought the author just nothing. After the war it appeared in a cheap edition—perhaps a consequence of the praises of D. H. Lawrence, who said it was a book written with a man's guts, or something of the kind. That is possibly the reason why it gives *me* the impression of a book composed without a compass. The writer changed his intention and his course many times before he finished it. He did not know how to finish it. The irruption of a Welsh landlady as the *dea ex machina* to assassinate the Pope betrays not only an appalling lack of humour but of that elementary verisimilitude which one expects in the most lurid newspaper novelette. The incoherence of the book, the lack of cohesion in the one developed character, are among the reasons why it is so tiresome to read. Another is a complete absence of irony towards himself. Because of this, there are pages which are nothing but a paying off of scores between him and some of his acquaintance, unknown to fame. They weary the reader, who has not the key to the allusions and has no mind for the inclemencies of private brawls. This sort of thing is invariably bad art. Swift knew that well enough. "Gulliver" is an attack on governments and institutions in the broad. When Swift went out after individuals he used the epigram in verse, as Burns did later, or the pamphlet. So did Whistler, superior to Rolfe as a writer and far more formidable as a duellist. Besides, Whistler confined his attacks to those who had some figure in the world. It is a mistake to attack the little—in public, at any rate, or probably at all.

What differentiates *Hadrian the Seventh*, in addition to signs of a mental discipline of which one result is the correct spelling of the proper name in the title, is the ecclesiastical side, done with first-hand knowledge. This is not the same as to say that it is exact. Ferdinand Fabre's *L'Abbé Tigraïne* is a truer picture of the Catholic clergy, because it is quite detached, without enthusiasm or malevolence. Like Rolfe, Fabre deals with men, not at all with religion. By neither one nor the other are dogmas

put in question, or even discussed ; and therefore, if it be too much to expect that the ecclesiastical authority should approve of such books, there is nothing in them which can be formally condemned.

Were it not for the ecclesiastical atmosphere, *Hadrian the Seventh* might pass in the first part of it for a book of Gissing's, and not the best Gissing. Gissing endured what Rolfe did. He started life with an error which put him off the appointed track and gave him a morbid taint which led to skulking and a total lack of self-assertion—"a hunted-hare look," as Clodd, the banker, said. All his interest was in things of the mind. He was a man to be the keeper of some great library or museum, and he lived with a drunken wife in a slum, grinding out novels of six hundred pages at £50 each. He must have been often moved to expostulate, for he was victimized quite as much as Rolfe ever was ; but he hardly ever did. A number of considerations held him back, and principally the lines of conduct considered proper to a well-mannered Englishman—a consideration which did not weigh with Rolfe at all. Gissing had not been given a special twist by an ecclesiastical training. A priest, even if he puts away his Orders, will never be like other men. How can he be ? All his training has tended to convince him that he is a man set apart and above other men. Though Rolfe never reached the Priesthood, he had been trained enough in the way of it to take the definite shape.

Gissing told what he had been through in his book "Henry Rycroft." If his account is not so poignant as the *Life of Rolfe*, the reason is that "Rycroft" was a series of papers written for a high-class magazine, and high-class magazines in those days strictly limited the amount of squalor they would accept ; whereas Rolfe's biographer has printed all the squalor and petty scandal he could lay his hands on. Both men dreamed in their squalor. Rolfe's dream was to be a priest, an ecclesiastical diplomat ; Gissing's to be housed and to have the petty sordid cares of life taken off his hands once for all. He told me that he considered the lot of Coleridge with the Gilmans at Highgate the happiest that could befall a man of the writing profession. He knew Greek and Latin better than Rolfe, perhaps other subjects too. In temperament he was shrinking and inclined to acquiesce. Rolfe feared no man and no thing. Gissing would rather have been

cheated out of his daily bread than fight for it. In intelligence they were about equal; neither had very much; their general ideas are not worth taking into consideration. The lack of Gissing's style is distinction; otherwise it is good clear language, occasionally flawed by an attempt to do some fine writing, but quickly recovering its measure. In so much it is better than Rolfe's, in which the effort at fine writing, or strange writing, is continual. I suppose that Rolfe's style if analyzed would leave a deposit of William Morris and Ruskin. Morris I never heard him speak of, but I do remember him saying that Ruskin had "a perfectly beautiful mind."

His writing is best, because least ornamented and clearest, in some parts of *Hadrian the Seventh*. Mr. Symons praises those books of his which strive to reproduce bygone periods of history. Sorry indeed would I be to have to read them. Besides the bric-à-brac style, every impediment in the way of spelling, punctuation, esoteric words, that he can roll in the way of the reader, he rolls. He was one of my schoolmasters for a while, and I believe it was I, young as I was, who set him on the way of the final k in words ending in *ic* and of writing *shew* for the more usual *show*—forms which he kept to till the end of his days. He was a man formed, and I was but a schoolboy; about a lot of things I knew less than he did; but I had at least more reading, and accordingly was able to supply him with lists of obsolete words and spellings which made him prance with delight. This came back to me upon reading in one of his printed letters that he had amplified his vocabulary by inventing words compounded of Greek and Latin. As Baudelaire said of Petrus Borel, who was of Rolfe's kin, I cannot think without a sympathetic shudder of the wearisome battles he had to wage with publishers and printers in order to realize his typographic dream.

The best writing of his known to me is a letter covering four or five pages of his biography which tells of a day and night in a boat among the Venetian islands and lagoons. Of Venice, upon which so many masters in the principal European languages have lavished their talent, it is hard to say anything unexpected and fresh; but this letter is. No anthology of English prose published henceforth should omit it. Conversely, the brocaded style he beat out to convey his fictional studies of the Italian Renaissance weighs down matter in itself badly in need of wings to get off the ground.

It is quite noteworthy, that although he was in some sort a victim of society—a man worth saving, who asked for bread and was given a stone, who claimed a man's right to live and work and could not get pay for his work—there are no social revindications in all his writings, not even in his letters. Perhaps he had no trust in political remedies for human misery; perhaps his religious temperament made him think that as all happens by God's will it is sinful to revolt; perhaps—and this I think the true explanation—to give his particular misfortunes a general application he never got enough outside himself. It contented him to scourge his personal enemies. Some of these, at any rate, it was too great a strain on flesh and blood to resist pounding. St. Paul and Dante in like case could not resist.

But there is on the whole little complaint in his letters of his physical sufferings. The last letter he ever wrote is the only one in which he speaks at length on this subject: it is almost too poignant to read. Another noticeable fact is, that never is found any appeal to sentiment or affection, not even in the letters to his family. All the tears that were in his heart, all his sense of the pity of his lot, had their sole expression in the prayers murmured in some dim sanctuary lit only by the sacramental lamp. What terrible prayers they must sometimes have been!

5.

Were one on the ground of mere literary criticism it might be objected to Mr. Symons' treatment of his subject that the noble and holy aspect of Rolfe's character is too subdued, and what tells against him emphasized to accord with the formula: Great artist—great scoundrel. But it is hard to make a scoundrel of a man whose gravest crimes were that like Poe, Landor, Hazlitt, the Catholic Léon Bloy, he was a quarreller, and like Goldsmith, "explored all the avenues of expense which folly could suggest." This last phrase is indeed no truer for Goldsmith than for Rolfe: such a sensible man as Samuel Johnson should have perceived that to do anything so gorgeous a man must be in a position to do it. But poets have contracted very large debts? Yes, when the poet is Byron, or Lamartine who was a national figure in politics; not when he lives in a back room and drudges for a

publisher. This was the existence of Rolfe during many years, and yet it seems he was a monster of ingratitude. Ingratitude towards whom? To those who exploited him, sweated the flesh off his bones, in exchange for a wage that a chimney-sweep would spit on? There are many who think when it comes to imponderable values, such as intellectual labour must be, that one who gives in exchange a sum of money, however inadequate, takes the superior position of a benefactor. A reading of Rolfe's letters makes it abundantly plain that he was grateful even beyond what decency requires, to those who did him any real service.

His life was not favorable to the development of serenity and the sweet disposition. It was much more likely to develop hydrophobia. Henry James said that Turguenev was the only "safe" author he had known. It is not sustainable that Rolfe was "safe"—though when I knew him he was eminently so. But that was before he sickened of disappointment and his days became a long disaster. Dealing with him in his later years must often have been like handling a gamekeeper's trap when set. His life was confused and a mixture of good and blame-worthy, as most lives are, but in the longest part it was made up of bitter defeat, of poverty always verging on destitution, of austerity and prayer.

But Mr. Symons' book in which the antithesis—great Writer, great Scoundrel—is cleverly balanced throughout, will do more to make Rolfe known than anything he did himself. It is sometimes seen that posthumous diaries and papers, impromptu letters, prove more interesting than what a man laboured himself for publication. So it appears in this instance—at least to me. Rolfe's books have been admired by some whose attained position in the world of writings gives their opinion more weight than mine has. It is not so much that I dislike these books, as that I am impermeable: I have a head of a different formation from those heads which can be penetrated by them. Though Rolfe was afflicted with an artistic temperament and some of its worst inconveniences, it is just good art that his books lack—the kind of art which carries along some of the books of the Rosicrucian Josephin Pélédan, who was a Rolfe for week-days. Should there be a few others who share my opinion, they will be surprised by the clear rapid unornamented prose of many of the letters printed in the biography, a prose which says precisely in lean

sentences what the writer wants to say. And that is often excellent.

If I am sorry, nevertheless, that ever I saw Symons' book, the reason has nothing to do with literature or artistic considerations. It is a personal matter. For almost everyone there are some figures of our childhood and youth which have taken an unalterable aspect in memory, like a portrait in a frame. Among these, for me, was this man. I used to like best to recall one afternoon, as with him and another, whom also I shall never see again, we came out from Evensong in Worcester Cathedral and strolled through the Close in the twilight and talked—or at least I did—of *John Inglesant*, *The Channings*, and of *Esmond* too, for the choir had been singing the hundredth and twenty-sixth psalm: "When the Lord turned the captivity of Zion we were like them that dream." Everybody remembers how touchingly the words are used in a chapter of *Esmond*.

We made our way through the fair old streets while the lamps were being lighted and the farmers and country people starting for a long drive in the dusk. So we came to the railway station, where we parted, myself and my brother returning to school, and Rolfe elsewhere. Those who have read *John Inglesant* will remember how at the end Inglesant and a friend are walking in the shadow of Worcester Cathedral while the sunset light reddens and dies on the towers. "The sun has gone down," said Mr. Inglesant cheerfully, "but it will rise again. It is time for us to go home."

Those were among the last words I remember saying to Frederick William Rolfe in this world.

And here now is a book where he is become a man of sorrows, traduced and reviled, spending days without hope among the merciless and misunderstanding, in conflicts petty and barren which drove him mad. As I read I could hardly see some of the pages. For the captivity was never turned for him, neither did the sun rise again.

IRISH POETRY TO-DAY

By Austin Clarke

IRISH poetry seems to be rapidly approaching a state of destitution but there is, of course, always the shabby genteel consolation that it has seen better days. Not too many years before the Rising our poetry was prosperous and, to borrow a phrase from a seventeenth century Gaelic poem of repentance, it pleased "the coach-loving world." It had a prevalent mood of its own and it was not without influence abroad. The present Poet Laureate, Gordon Bottomley, Walter de la Mare, G. K. Chesterton were among the poets who owed something to the Irish Literary Revival. But that happy and rather self-conscious period has passed away. Our publishers and periodicals are no more. The sympathetic ear and the helping hand have gone, even the famous old hat has a hole in it. To-day our youngsters, with a few exceptions, are attracted to the predominant school of English contemporary verse. We are faced once more with the dangers of provincialism and fashions at second hand.

The aims of A.E. Yeats, and other workers in the early days of the revival seem now to have been reasonable and moderate despite the scepticism and opposition those heretical aims aroused at the time. We were to express our own outlook, to be as independent as the poets of the Belgian literary renaissance. We would free our minds as the Scandinavian writers did when they threw off the yoke of Danish literary domination. The preliminary phase was necessarily one of transition, of enthusiastic conversion, of adaption to a newly realised environment of thought. The Celtic Twilight movement which sprang up here and elsewhere has been much blamed, but it has never been the subject of impartial study. The mingling of old and new, of romantic and racial material, the use of an impressionistic technique and of French symbolism produced curious results. Starting without the handicap of constitutionalism, the new poetry was well in advance of contemporary English poetry, both in its technique and its subtle range of consciousness. Here was something, at any rate, quite different,

—vers d'une ancienne étoffe, exténuée,
Impalpable comme le son et la muée,

When I first discovered for myself the Celtic Twilight and read the earlier poems of Yeats and others, all was entirely incomprehensible to me. I groped through a mist of blurred meanings, stumbled through lines in which every accent seemed to be in the wrong place. It was all quite unlike English poetry and quite unlike that Gaelic poetry which Dr. Douglas Hyde declaimed for us in class, excitedly jumping from the rostrum-step to the floor and back again. When I had made, however, the grand tour of English literature, the difficulties were gone. It was pleasant to escape from the mighty law and order of English poetry into that shadowy, irresponsible world of delicate rhythm and nuance.

But the cloudiness of the Celtic Twilight gradually condensed among our hills, and when the sun came out the grass was all the greener. The *fin de siècle* movement was almost simultaneous with the rise of the national and language movement and the exciting recovery of traditional material. With the next generation of poets the movement had gravitated towards its true centre, and happy days had come for we had home rule in our literature. When Thomas MacDonagh wrote his book of creative criticism on literature in Ireland, he based his work on the assumption that this literary centralisation was almost complete. But Easter Week swept away an entire new school of poets and that tragic set-back was increased by succeeding events.

During the last twelve years or so the inevitable development of novel and short story was quickened by our little Irish wars. Revolutionary events gave the new writers dramatic situations and characters for the taking. But the mood of cynical disillusion and shattered ideals from which these new writers drew their hasty strength was itself an illusion. The imagination of the country was inflamed and our internal wars were not on as great a scale as they appeared to be. It is clear that the nation received no fatal wound when cruel men and politicians proceeded to exterminate each other. It persisted in forging ahead, and at this point we can see the main issues—the land, the moral problem and the expansion of religion. Excellent prose was produced, but also much that is hysterical, and a product of the inflamed national imagination. Our novelists must now get down to “fundamental brainwork.”

Blood and thunder stories about gigantic gunmen are as

popular in England now as our former fairies. But there is a critical tariff against Irish verse, and this need not concern us if we are content to write for ourselves. The reaction is partly due to the oversea exploitation of the earlier movement, partly to the patriotic and quite reasonable self-defence measures taken by the Georgian school of poets immediately after the war.

An important event which cannot be ignored in any discussion of the present state of Irish poetry is the return of Mr. Yeats to the main sources of English literature. "For many years," writes Mr. L. A. G. Strong, "English poets have united in acknowledging W. B. Yeats as their leader. He commands to-day the respect of all, old and new. Eliot has blessed him; and he influences at three score and ten a fresh generation as powerfully as he did the young poets he met when he was young." These young English poets find expressed in his later work their own spiritual problems, and with typical insularity ignore the Irish quality in it as something foreign to their mentality and of no possible interest to them. Only this year, Mr. Wyndham Lewis, the former editor of *Blast*, burst into song:—

The greater Yeats
Turning his back on Ossian, relates
The blasts of more contemporary fates.

Magnificent as the poet's later work is, we have to realise that it is steeped in the rich imaginative associations of English literature and expressed in the clear measures, the eloquence of that historic mode.

When we consider the numerous essays, articles, lectures and theories which Mr. Yeats devoted to the cause of an independent Irish art, we may well feel that the very ground on which we once stood so firmly has been undermined. Were the original aims of the movement necessarily conditioned by artistic expediency? Was our revival, as George Birmingham pleasantly suggests in his recent autobiography, but a flash in the pan? Must our literature be no more than a clearing-house or a training depot? Far from thinking this, I would suggest that Mr. Yeats's development actually proves our case. When we match the jigsaw puzzles of his various phases, we can see that his flightiness belongs to the adventurous, restless Anglo-Irish type of the past, those writers who, lacking lares of their own, were extraordinarily

responsive and adaptable to any environment in which they happened to find themselves, Wilde, Shaw, and so forth. George Birmingham is a case in point, iron northerner, Unionist, Nationalist, Gaelic Leaguer, Church of Ireland clergyman, Church of England clergyman, Army chaplain, Continental chaplain, Somerset village parson and London preacher, novel in all but his humour. Mr. Yeats, coming too soon before the new forces of racial recovery, was unable to find that complete identification of interests which others found, and with rare artistic integrity continued his search, turning to the metaphysical Anglicans and modern intellectual encyclopædism. In expressing so completely his own type, Mr. Yeats presents us with the case for integrity. If we can express eventually our own scholastic mentality in verse, I believe that our art will lead us not towards, but away from English art. In prose, that change was prepared by Moore and accomplished by Joyce.

"I feel within myself a mediæval soul," exclaims Unamuno, and if we have his courage, many of us, too, must take up that cry. In a recent study of contemporary Spanish literature, Mr. V. S. Pritchett refers to Ireland and other countries outside the main stream:—"There are two kinds of society in Europe: the modern, mechanized and irreligious, possessing an international economic homogeneity; and the less powerful, non-mechanized society which is only at the beginning of the struggle of its values and traditions against the machine, and is still nationalist in tendency and essence. And as there are two societies in Europe, so there are two literatures, one in the main European current and the other outside it." He pays us the compliment of recognising that our type does not belong to the English type. We must register in our own way the effect of the blasts of contemporary fates. There is nothing new in all this, but at a time when values are confused and temptations are great, it is essential to keep our true purpose—that of self-expression—before us.

I think that our attitude towards the present pandemonium in English poetic life should be that of neutral interest. The trouble is not so much one of poetry as of the English mentality itself. Few realise that English poetry is rather like the British constitution, surrounded by pompous precedents and reverences. The novel experience of adversity has profoundly disturbed that country: cricket, the Navy, commerce and other articles of

faith in the national religion have been shaken. Reform and change in English poetry are as slow as in the British constitution itself. The so-called modernists have attempted to expand the range of consciousness in English verse and to develop its diction. Successive bands of young poets have hurled themselves at the unyielding mass, but there is something in the national temperament which prevents them from remaining rebels for very long. The radicals of yesterday are the conservatives of to-morrow. Edith Sitwell is now a constitutional critic, Richard Aldington and Robert Graves, to mention only a few, now write popular novels for the suburbs. Mr. T. S. Eliot, the American poet, managed to quicken the pace for a time with a mixture of American poetry, jazz and Continental influences. But he, too, has succumbed like the others. This American is now a fervent Anglo-Catholic, a Royalist, an accepted writer on such stock themes of the English literary faith as Marlowe, Dryden, Chapman and so forth. The younger schools are now discussing their new discovery of natural rhythm and speech. These elements, as we know, were the basis of the Irish poetic revival in its reaction from the Victorian rhetoric of the older political poetry, and almost twenty years ago Thomas MacDonagh made them the main subject of his critical study.

How far are we limited by English as an art medium? In a recent review Mr. Lascelles Abercrombie made some interesting comments on Mr. Lyle Donaghy's last book, "Into the Light." Mr. Donaghy, in a rather ingenuous preface, had claimed to be in the Gaelic tradition. "This 'classic' Irish tradition," writes Mr. Abercrombie, "seems to produce in Mr. Donaghy (except for a few themes and allusions and a good many proper names) just good English poetry. It is odd that our non-English nationals should forget that if they write their poetry in English, they write it in the tradition of English poetry, for in poetry you cannot get away from the artistic tradition of the medium." Mr. Abercrombie's criticism is shrewd. He cannot be blamed for not finding in Mr. Donaghy's book that 'classic' tradition for it is not there, except in the preface. Mr. Donaghy has been for years steeped in the philosophical and metaphysical atmosphere of the contemporary English school and only recently changed his milieu. But with the illustrious precedent of other Anglo-Irish writers, he has leaped before he looked. It has never occurred to him to learn Irish and study its literature

before he started claiming to be in its tradition. Nevertheless, the awareness of that unexplored territory has in itself given him a new sense of freedom, and he has produced fine poetry in this book, so fine indeed, that I am not certain whether Irish would really be good for him. To return to Prof. Abercrombie, he tells us definitely that non-English nationals cannot get away with it so easily. If they write in the medium of English poetry, they must consider themselves under arrest. They cannot escape from the artistic tradition of the medium. But how does Prof. Abercrombie know that all the possibilities of that medium have been numbered? Latin, even when it was dead, came to life as the language of the soul; it rang down rhyming stanzas in stress measures, hasty and exultant. If he will not admit that some of our Irish poetry is different, we may point to American poetry in which free verse is now a distinct and fine form.

The discovery of Gaelic song and ballad gave our poetry its first impulse and mental form. But ever since the establishing of the Free State the major written literature has been quietly appearing over our mental horizon. In his "Hidden Ireland," Prof. Daniel Corkery let some embarrassing cats out of the bag of history which he has been endeavouring ever since to catch again. But he drew our attention by his imaginative criticism to a complete long-neglected school of rich sensuous poetry in Gaelic. Scotland's chief poet of to-day, Hugh MacDiarmid, caught immediate fire and inspiration from this suddenly revealed mode. Take another arrival—Norman Gaelic love poetry with its irony, sophistication and interplay of conscience. The art of these poems is of fascinating interest, for in them a European and native tradition blend. But these poems, except for a few translated by Mr. Robin Flower, are still locked up in difficult Gaelic. Another imaginative world which remains entirely neglected is that of our native religious poetry. Reading it, reviving for ourselves its formal diction, we forget the abasement of religious imagination to-day. We are in a world of art in which emotion is pure, choice and disciplined. In the sixteenth and seventeenth century religious school, the blending of contemporary Continental art with mediæval and native forms gives us a style delicate and rare. There are emotional forms which we have long since forgotten, for instance, the confession form, those poems in which poets confessed publicly their exciting sins, their hard drinking, immorality and, I fear, frequent mockery and vituperation of the clergy.

Glancing through Irish poetry we notice that it was a medium in which could be expressed the drama of conscience and of inner conflict. We find mediæval forms which expressed the natural man as well as his sublimated self of romantic and classic convention. These forms were common in mediæval French lyric, but did not pass into the English lyric tradition. As an example of surviving form, I may mention the Love Songs of Connaught. Their wealth of imagery blinded their first discoverers to the mental conflict, the depth of temptation expressed in them.

Our elder poets gave to English verse a subtle rhythm and style of their own. In the system of Gaelic assonance we can find a legitimate means now of varying our medium to suit our peculiar needs. Occasional assonance was used instinctively in popular verse of a bilingual period, and A. E. has drawn attention to Larminie's experiments. The younger English poets are now experimenting in 'false rhyme,' a system accidentally discovered, I believe, by Mrs. Browning and first popularised by the 'divided rhyme' of Wilfrid Owen, a war poet, whose system proved impracticable. But it is at best an occasional device. Cracked rhymes must end eventually in cracked verses. Assonance, on the other hand, is a complete medium and capable of development. In some forms of classic Gaelic metre only one part of a double syllable word is used in assonance, a system also found in the Spanish ballad metres, and this can be a guide to experiment in partial rhyming or assonance. Assonance is not the enemy of rhyme. It helps us to respect rhyme, which has been spoiled by mechanical use. By means of assonance we can gradually approach, lead up to rhyme, bring it out so clearly, so truly as the mood needs, that it becomes indeed the very *vox caelestis*.

With so much new material coming to hand, I think it would be foolish if we turned our backs on the descendants of Oisín, or Ossian, as Mr. Lewis calls him. In trying to express our own problems, we can at least learn something from an art which fulfilled its own needs. Ireland is in an extraordinarily interesting stage of self-discovery in material, moral and spiritual affairs. If we succeed in expressing our own casuistic mentality as deeply as we can, we shall not be far from those problems and we must shoulder the blame. Irish poetry has lost the ready ear and the comforts of recognition. But we must go on. We must be true to our own minds.

THE POPLAR

By Padraic Fallon

BEFORE returning indoors after his nightly visit to the back of the house, the old man made his usual pause under the poplar tree by the gable. From there he would feel his fields stretching down to the river; his mind would rove over them without a plan, jumping a little at first among the sights and incidents of the day, and then, as though absorbed by the earth, spreading itself out beyond thought, dewy and peaceful. This was his moment, his flowering; it would seem to him afterwards that he had been spread over his bit of land, as if, indeed, he were the land itself with the weather on him, whispering to the roots of the airy shapes that are the end of growth. It was a kind of wisdom, he would think; and thank God for it during the night when the sleepless fit would come and fill him with the weariness of the world.

To-night there was no peace for him. He leaned against the tree trunk and shut his eyes trying to stifle the tumult of anger within him. So the place wasn't good enough for them, those children of his; his grand house too small for them and their fine American friends; and it after rearing eight of them with no stint of room or decency. What grandeur was getting into them at all? It had been good enough for their mother, it was good enough for him; and Johnny, who'd come into it after him, wasn't saying any word against it. He looked up at the gable through the branches though he knew the shape of it as well as his own hand. A fine-looking block and the moon rubbing the eaves; oh, a fine dwelling when you thought of what was in it forty years ago, a poor, miserable dog-cabin, like Mouseen Brady's down in the bog. And he had quarried the stone for it himself, and carried it, and mixed the mortar, laid stone on stone with old Jerry Lyons the mason, hoisted the roof-tree with him and hauled up the new blue slates. He remembered the neighbours when the slates were on and the glass in; a master-piece, surely; oh! a masterpiece; he was proud that day. And now those two she-whelps of his couldn't find air or grace to it. A pity the ribbony ways weren't knocked out of them and they young; too soft they got life, too soft. The boys were at home then to do the heavy work, Mick, Tom, Peter, James, Johnny. Fine boys. Pictures of them started leaping in his head; little fellows in white homespun always noising about the place,

bigger—oh limber-fellows—turning furrow and swathe with him, a great help. Gone now; only memories, memories scarcely disturbed by the queer stilted letters he got from them now and then that brought barely an echo to him of the boys he had bred and known, as he thought, to their bone. They had gone their ways; and he,—he was left with a couple of daughters who would rule the roost on him if they could; and Johnny. Thanks be to God for Johnny.

But he'd not change it, not alter a stone of it. It was too much a part of him now, too much a part of the farm to be broken lightly. It was the mould he had fitted himself to, if that was broken he was broken. And the poplar? If he let them cut that down he'd be in a hard case when the still moonlit nights would be drowning the world, and they all asleep but himself; he lying there with not a stir on earth or air to keep him company but the little song the tree would be making when the wind was caught in its boughs.

And now the little branches at the top began to flutter and soon the whole tree was shivering with a music like dripping water. His mood changed; his usual peace filled him—and something else, something strange and exultant that he felt, somehow, rose up into him from the fields. He stood up straight, drawing his breath deeply, and walked from the flickering shadows into the full moonlight, his being all eyes and ears. . . . For a long time it seemed to him that he was nothing but a sense of the night; the river noising in the glen field through its moon-smoke seemed very close to him; above it, he knew, the ewes would be cropping the sweet grass, and above that again in the hill meadow the milch cows would be lying quietly with the cud, the new shorthorn, maybe, crushing into the hedge for a few rich mouthfuls now that the others left her in peace for a time; east and west was the mourning of dogs, and on the road near him the stepping of neighbours going a-ceilhidhe. He was filled with happiness, with strength. The land he stood on was his; he had given it his labour and sweat, and now that it was tilled and stocked, its wild hair combed to his liking, it seemed to have taken on a queer friendly kind of humanness and, at the same time, admitted him to the glittering elemental thing that was its heart.

What were the whims of children to him, he thought, as he turned to go in? He had made this place out of love and

shaped himself in the making of it. The farm and himself were like a long-married couple. Let them wait until he was dead before they started marrying his widow.

The daughters were knitting quietly by the fire when he went in. He looked at them kindly, firmly. What were they but children after all, children that get one funny whim after another, and never really know what's good for them. Ellen got up and filled him his plate of stirabout; she was tousled-looking, tearstained. He grinned at her; but she avoided his eyes as she always did when he crossed her. He didn't mind; she'd be turning again to him in an hour or two.

"First thing in the morning," he said, dipping into his bowl of milk, "you can take your pen and tell Mary that I won't do what she wants me to do to the house."

She made no reply, so he went on eating quietly. He didn't really want to talk any more, but he wanted to be sure that his order would be obeyed; so he began again, reasonably, as one giving a verdict: "She's a good girl, she sends ye money and ye dress yourselves on it; she sends me money and I put it into the place, but if she thinks that gives her the right of ordering us about what we might do, I'd rather, to tell the truth, that she'd keep her money." "If she did," Ellen said without lifting her head, "there wouldn't be a place at all in it."

"And why not?"

"What's in it" she asked as quietly "but an old man and a weakling of a son? Who's to do the work?"

"Your mother and meself did it when ye were only coming along, and did it well." Cissie shrugged impatiently. "It's no lie I'm telling" he said to her hard little back, "there was always enough for everyone of ye" . . . "And" he continued "if ye'd stir a little more about the place and help ye'r brother as other girls do, instead of gallivanting to Delia's place in town, ye'd have no need of anybody's charity."

"Sluts and slatterns he'd make of us, Cissie:" Ellen was bridling; her face a wild red. She got up and made a few odd, hasty movements about the kitchen. Now he was for it he thought, shrinking a bit; he was getting too old for these scenes; but he'd stick to his guns.

"Slaves he'd have us now" she was saying, "and we slaves enough already. Into the fields we'll be turned with the wandering

Connemara men to thin his turnips and dig his spuds ; and we giving our lives here to the minding of him " . . .

" That's little," he interrupted her, " and the fine eating and drinking ye've out of it."

" The rest who went away on you mustn't have thought it very fine or they'd likely have stayed," Cissie put in. She was always cool, he thought, as hard and as bright as a shilling.

" You might be going yourself," he insinuated, eying her keenly.

" Little thanks I get here," she looked at him, her glance like an asp, " my bit grudged to me, and it hard earned."

Ellen was crying softly in the corner. " Little thanks anyone gets from him " she sobbed, " I don't mind for myself for I'm used to his ingratitude ; but what'll that girl think of him refusing the one thing she's ever asked of him and she herself willing to put her hand in her own pocket and pay for it."

" One thing," Cissie said, " I'm not going to be here when her friends come if the house is left in the way it is."

" Ye can go any day," he told her. He must be hard now. " I expect Johnny'll have the woman in then to give them a welcome. There's time enough."

" I can go now," Ellen said, " and make room for the stranger ; and I gave him my best days when I could be filling a stocking nice and easy for myself beyond with my sisters."

" You can stay, too," he put in, " if you behave yourself."

" And be a footstool to a stranger ? I'd sooner die. Oh no ! I'll be off with the rest of them ; and maybe when you're scalded with the stranger, you'll have cause to wish I was back."

She was going up the stairs now ; " and you will be scalded," she continued, " for there's not one in the world will put up with as much from you as I did."

Didn't he know it, he thought ? . . . But he might as well be dead as living in the place and it changed beyond recognition ; . . . and the poplar cut down. If they could alter the house without killing the tree, he might consider it ; but they could only add to the house from that one side. A pity, a pity he couldn't meet them some way. If he explained to them now what the tree meant to him . . . sure they'd think he was mad. Youth and health could never understand age and decay. Better show them an unbroken front. " Ye can write in the morning

as I told ye" he told them; but they had already disappeared up the stairs.

That night when he wakened from his few hours of hard-won sleep, the moonlight was pouring through the poplar leaves in thin needlelike cascades. It was very still. In the other end of the room, Johnny was stirring uneasily, breathing loudly. The hours that he dreaded were ahead of him. He was the only person awake in the house; maybe the only person awake in the world; the world itself, the busy, comfortable world of day, folded up like a sleeping snail. Only the moon was out, riding her own vacant light high and lonely in the middle air. This kind of night always laid a spell on him; the silence of it, the unearthly stillness loosened his moorings somehow from the comfortable ways of his usual thought. The solid things—or what seemed solid during the day—would lose importance, become hollow, airy; shapes that had no substance; even the house itself, sometimes, would seem as precarious as a rook's nest that would be rocking on the top of a tree. And though, afterwards, looking at the mortared stone and slate and the heavy cut of it, he'd wonder at himself for giving heed to such a foolish thought, while it held sway on him it seemed as natural a thing to believe in as anything else. It was queer the things he thought of; the things he watched himself thinking, looking down on himself as on a stranger as though he were poising in the air above himself eying a queer old fearsome creature that was in some unaccountable way his body.

Johnny's breathing eased, flowed into a gentle monotony scarcely heard. There was no stir in the house, no stir at all on earth nor in air. Outside, he knew, the world was drowned in cold moonlit tides of silence, mountain-high they would be, that turned homely, familiar signs to mysteries, the tamed to the wild as if a dark spirit in them had been merely waiting its time to mingle unsecretly with the terrible untamed that held sway when God slept during the night hours. If only it was day! . . . Or if there was anyone to talk to. Maire, God rest her, when she was in it would be whispering to him of things that happened about the place during the day; the Lonely had no power on him then. If she was here now, his mind wouldn't be slipping on him. If Johnny woke now, they'd have a few words over a pipe; but he wouldn't wake him—tempted though

he was; the boy needed his sleep, and little enough he got of it, poor fellow. Oh if there was any noise at all now that would break the spell, any little noise, he'd be all right.

He tried to fix his thoughts on things he knew, on the land, on the way it had taken him to its heart that evening; but he couldn't revive the ecstasy. The silence was invading him, quietly, irresistibly. . . . It possessed him; washed him out of his body on long vague moonlit waves, a huddled thing, half entranced. He wouldn't call Johnny; . . . he would,—he couldn't. There was a vastness above him, about him, pale hollows underneath. He gasped; if he awoke now, he would fall like a stone; but he was lighter than air; he hardly felt he was himself at all; he was an eddy of air, a cold drifting thing beyond life . . . And then there was a sound about him; and suddenly a landscape took shape at his feet. He knew that sound—the poplar; and he was on solid ground, his feet in his fields again. He was very quiet listening to it, thinking it was over his head and he leaning against the rough trunk, the like of many an evening. Then its song began to seem strange to him and he stirred a bit uneasily. He was in bed, in bed, of course, and the fit was over him, over him for a time. He lay back contented with the windplay of the tree. He was all right, thank God; not gone yet.

He got cramps then and he sat up to rub them out of his limbs. Johnny was pitching about in sleep again, poor boy; a light sleeper like himself. He got up and stamped on creaking muscles about the room. The blood flowed back prickling him. He leaned on the windowsill jerking his legs up and down, staring at the shivering pattern of leaf that filled the light-space. It was tossing out a nice sweet noise, God bless it; a friendly, sheltering noise. Under it was the good black earth; grass with the dew on it; bushes asleep on their shadows; in the hill meadow the cows would be stretched with the cud; lower, by the river, the ewes would be, some of them wandering, cropping, others of them lying down with the half-grown lambs around them. The pictures filled him. He was nearly content.

"What kind of a night is in it?" . . . Ah! the boy was awake—and fiddling about for his pipe as usual.

"Good enough" he told him "spite of the falling moon."

He got back to bed and set the clothes around him. Johnny was lighting up. "Will you take a blast of this?"

He was a thoughtful lad. "Smoke away," he answered, "I'll redden my own."

He was content now; life was stirring about him again. They'd be smoking and talking for an hour or two; 'twouldn't be far from the dawn then, and maybe he'd get a good sleep. . . . He stretched out comfortably . . .

When he came down late next morning, Cissie dressed in hat and coat was pumping her bicycle at the door. Another trip to the town! He sat on the hobstone and put on his boots. Ellen came and laced them for him. She was closed, secret-looking,—but not too much so. He smiled down at her.

"Where's Cissie going?" he asked, "to town again?"

"Aye! To post a letter—if you want to know."

"Better give it to the calling postboy" he thought; but he didn't say so. No good in pressing them. He had won his point and that was enough. Let it rest there. He got up, stamping a bit to ease his feet in the boots. Cissie came in, put the pump on the dresser, and went out without a word, without a look at him. She'd keep it up a long time, never forget. He watched her open the roadgate and walk away pushing the bicycle. A trim, extremely shapely little slip, soft to look on and to talk to but with a will the like of sharpened steel. Where was she got at all? And yet, a good girl, kind to him in her way—but not Ellen's way, not Maire's. She wouldn't sacrifice much for him. Still as he stood there with the sun warming him, his heart went out to her; she had his own courage, his own hard selfwill; she was his daughter all right.

He went wandering out.

"Don't do too much, now," Ellen called after him.

"All right" he said, kindly. She was a good girl, a good girl.

II.

Next Sunday, he was surprised to receive a visit from Delia and her husband John Carr. They weren't frequent visitors. Delia was the family success. The eldest of his clutch, she had

been apprenticed to the drapery in the neighbouring market-town. There she had married John Carr of the Hotel, a subtle, wary man of genial surface, a prince of jobbers. They had got on—inevitably, he thought now, as he watched his daughter's face which, somehow, had come to reflect not the clean bright thing he had thought was in her but the rapacious, grasping spirit of her husband. An ugly graft, an ugly graft.

"How are you, Da?" She was kissing him.

"Well, well, well;" he was a bit flustered; it was a long time since he had met her . . . and she had been his favourite back in the old days; what a long time ago it must be, he thought, as he eyed the mottled gills, the blown bags under the eyes. Pictures of her as she had been then began to flock before him, a little coaxing rip, a dancer to her fingertips, a bubble of laughter. This one wouldn't coax: a big boss of a woman with a permanent smile, nearly as old-looking as himself. Seeing her was like coming on a grave and it digged for himself; he must be getting very old and he to have a daughter the like of her; very, very old. He had a sudden overwhelming fear.

But walking the farm with John, he found a spring in his step again. You would like John if you weren't doing business with him; a grand bluff man with storytelling in his blood. Listening to him was as good as a day at a fair with the tents crowded, the beasts lowing and pushing outside; a grand uproar, surely after the silent land, the unchanging pattern of the neighbours. He felt more alive than he had felt for a long time.

He was nearly gay, coming back. "You must," he said, "come up the stairs with me and try some of the Mouseen's last stilling." But John dawdled under the Poplar, filling his pipe; he wore his blandest air.

"Did you know Willie Mannion of Galway in the old days, Peter?" he asked.

"He bought sheep from me fifty and five years ago."

"There's a son of his in Kingsford now at the butchering; doing well, too. A good boy."

"He had a good father." He remembered him, a fair-dealing man, a bit haughty as befitted one of the old stock; no fault to that.

"He wanted to come out here to-day."

"Is it sheep he wants?"

"Oh, no!" John twinkled, "he has a set on your Cissie. 'Twouldn't be a bad match for her."

The old man was surprised. "Why didn't ye bring him with ye?" he asked, "I'd like a look at him."

"Women's notions," John answered; he was lighting his pipe, puffing casually. He went on: "He's a bit of a swank, you understand; Delia thought it better not to show him the place until he's properly tethered. She's a bit ashamed of it for some reason."

"It's a bit small, surely," his voice was almost dreamy as he took stock of the house, "but with a little addition to the gable there, a crowned head needn't shy at it. Worth while doing if you could leave by the money for it."

He turned to go in; the old man followed him, musing heavily. In some queer way he felt he was caught.

In the parlour, Delia smiled whitely at him and made room for him on the sofa beside her.

"I'm telling them," she said, "how I met Tessie O'Shaughnessy."

"The young one Johnny is for tying with?" he queried.

"Aye! Only I'm afraid it's all off as far as she's concerned." She turned to Ellen who was laying the table; "There's a plum-cake in the trap for Da's sweet tooth, Ellen."

She turned to him again: "she was in at my place on Tuesday with the father and mother and a party from Bresk. Making her match they were."

He was shocked. What would poor Johnny do at all at all.

"I thought everything was going smooth," he said, "she seemed pleased enough the day she was here."

"She likes Johnny well; it's other things she's doubtful of. But I'll give you her own words. 'The place' says she, 'is good and I like your father well, and I'd be very proud to go into it only for the size of the house. It's too small and that's a fact. What would I do when children came along and the two bedrooms taken up already.' I thought to persuade her to change her mind but she was very firm set."

"A great pity," Carr put in, "for she'd suit this place down to the ground."

"So she would," Delia continued, "and that's what drove us out here to-day to see if there was any possibility of fixing it from this side."

"If you're waiting on that," Ellen said, "you'll be rotten in your grave before you see the finish."

"And why?" Delia asked.

"Ask himself there."

Delia turned to him. He met her eye unresponsively. Ellen went on, after a pause: "Mary wants to put an addition to the house so as to have it decent when she brings her friends over in the Spring. She's willing to pay for it, too, but himself will have nothing to do with it."

Delia lifted her eyebrows.

"A good offer," Carr said, "worth thinking on, Peter."

He could say nothing. Here among them, his attitude seemed childish.

They sat down to tea.

It was falling dusk when they left. The old man saw them to the gate, gentle and courteous. The heart had gone out of him somehow, he thought, as he stood listening to the drum of the hooves fade into the air. He felt old, old. He wandered a bit down the road and leaned against a gate looking over the bog. He stood there a long time, pondering uncertainly, looking for a peace that he guessed somehow to be beyond him. There would be no peace until he had settled this—and, he thought, no peace when he did settle it. What was he to do, at all at all? Only last night he could stand on the grass and feel himself one with the land, unworried, with strength glittering up through his veins as though he were a fountain; sometimes he'd feel huge, immense, solid and airy at once as if he were a part of the earth, turning in sweet winds that burthened him with blossom. He would never feel that way again; you wanted ease in the mind, a single love to woo such a mood. It was lighter than air; the very weighing of it against his duty to his children would set it flying—had set it flying. Yet if he didn't cut the tree, he might win back the old certainty, the sense of sure relationship between himself and the farm. After all, it was still there and by

keeping it there—showing his love for it by sacrificing the welfare of his family—he might deepen the relationship and, maybe be lead farther into the bright realms he had sensed about him : oh ! he couldn't cut it down ; if he did, what would he be but a thing without moorings—alive, certainly, but one whose track in life had faded out before himself . . . and what was that but death, death without the peace of death, without the dignity of death, a poor, poor thing.

And if he didn't cut it down, what then ? Wouldn't he be in just as bad a fix. Wouldn't his conscience be at him ? Wouldn't he be thinking of himself always as standing in his children's light ? and wouldn't every day be bitter to him and that thought in his mind ? And with that feeling on him, what fellowship could he have with anything at all. It was little the children could give him for his sacrifice, for youth is always occupied with itself. He was moldered, moldered.

Far out in the air a star was stripped faintly and brightly ; the night had come. In an hour or two, now, the people would be in their beds and the tides of loneliness washing over a depeopled world. And he would be in bed too, and no comfortable thing in his mind to moor himself to ; for how could he slough this darkness from his soul in an hour . . . or in two hours . . . or—and the thought cowed him—in his lifetime ? He looked out bleakly, overwhelmed with a sense of final desolation. Star after star was stripped in silver above him ; then the moon came up and soon her's was the only light. He stood there, leaning on the gate, unconconscious of all thought but of the loneliness that was filling him. In the blue dimness to the west, a curlew was dropping its cold notes, cold song with the shining of waterdrops. Oh, lonely bird ! He turned to go in, half afraid now, as in the far-off days of his childhood, of the hedge-shadows and the queer unfamiliar shapes of the bushes. Happy days ! If he could only find by the fire now the comfort he used to find then, the protection he used to feel in his mother and in that slow man, his father. Ai ! Ai ! The curlew cried again, almost overhead ; he looked up but though a faint whirring of wings came to him, he couldn't see it. It cried again farther on. Lonely ! Lonely ! He stumbled along mourning himself childishly, mourning the curlew, identifying himself with it as if he too were adrift on vast pale hollows of air, little better than a ghost.

III.

He had come to a decision, of course ; come to it, he knew, when Delia had told her tale. That he had denied it to himself for the half of a day seemed to him now as he tossed in bed to be the meanest kind of selfishness, to be cowardice. What would Maire, God rest her, say if she knew the way he was treating her children. He imagined her contempt, writhing under it, taking shame to himself. He was a poor sort of creature with little sap or dignity . . . he that was famous in two baronies one time for the courage that was in him. What was he like now but an old yellow leaf that would be crying out ignobly against the inevitable withering ; against the will of God that gave to men as to all other things a springing and a falling. Shame on him, shame. He took his Rosary from under the pillow and addressed himself to it fervently, and as decade after decade slipped through his fingers in a grave monotony, his shame for himself was gradually shaped into a desire for immediate action, for action that would cleanse him. He'd fall, but he'd fall decently ; he'd finish like a song.

In the other bed, Johnny began to pitch and toss. Please God it wouldn't be too late to make amends to him. A good boy ; a very good boy.

"Will you have a blast out of this ?" . . . Ah ! he was awake.

He'd tell him now.

"I'll redden me own," he told him.

"Will I fill it for you ?"

He was a good boy, surely. A feeling of exultation came over him at the thought of the sacrifice he was about to make for him . . . And he was worth it.

"When do you expect to fix it up with that daughter of Shaughnessy's ?" he asked him.

"There's no hurry on either of us" . . . The reply was slow and careful.

"She'd suit you well ; she's a nice girleen."

"Nice enough."

"Did you hear there was talk of her marrying into some other place ?"

"I did . . . and good luck to her."

There was bitterness there in spite of the careful way he dressed it; but no complaining, no complaining at all; and the world knowing how fanciful he was over the same girl. Fine stuff in him, surely.

At the window the poplar began to stir; in a heartbeat, its shadowy presence was everywhere in the air; the room was a sweet sighing. His heart failed him. Would he be ever able to say the terrible words that would murder it. God give him strength. He sat up in the bed. There were lights and shadows about him like cool winds.

"It's a grand night," he heard Johnny say.

"Grand" he muttered. . . . Now! Now!

"First thing in the morning," . . . his voice seemed to be taking a dark shape in the room, blowing out the lights . . . "First thing in the morning get Jack and Mickeen Dillon and knock that tree outside."

There! It was done now. He lay back in the bed, choking. What was the boy saying?

"Did you say to knock it?"

Would he draw back now?—he could. "Knock it, knock it," he said.

They would break in now, the untamed, the unfriendly—for his protector would be gone.

"And why would we do that?"

Was the boy mocking him?

"Do what you're told." He was nearly shouting . . . But he had God. Oh, why hadn't he given Him more of his thought instead of making a pact with some earth-frail reflection of Him, a tree, a bit of land, that could be so easily broken.

"Well, we'll leave it stand for a while anyway," Johnny was saying, a hardly suppressed joy in his voice, "maybe its how you'd think differently in a day or two and it too late then."

"Knock it, KNOCK IT!" he roared.

It was final.

The soft music of the tree was ebbing, the room became bare and still. There was salt in his mouth; he was crying, crying. He started to cough and snore to hide the sobs that were coming up his throat. This must be the second childhood, he taunted himself; the last childhood. Babbycry! Babbycry!

It was late the following afternoon, when they managed to

get a crosscut saw and the double ropes. Mickeen Dillon came into the kitchen with them. There was a long, noisy tail of homegoing schoolchildren at his heels in search of a bit of fun. The old man hooshed them away. He left the house then and went wandering into the fields. He didn't want to be in at the death. As he moved across the bawn he was fearful every moment of hearing the first thud of the axe. He wouldn't look back. No. No. He clasped his hands shakily behind his back and maundered on. A lovely day, a lovely day, thanks be to God. Was there anything at all that he could be doing? The fowl, now, might be in the oats. Johnny was careless about that gap. Climbing the gap he looked back in spite of himself. Ai! . . . Ai! . . . They had a ladder against it and someone was tying a rope high up in the branches. Ai! . . . Ai! . . . And all the children that were gathered there to see it falling. Listen to them! All things were shows to the young. Ai! . . . Ai! . . . The turkeys were in the corn. He chased them, waving his hat and shouting. He bushed the gap well after him and sat down on the sunwarmed riverbank to rest himself. He sat there a long time watching the swift, bright running of the water, his ears full of the bubble and swing of it. His mind became hushed, thoughtless. Time got mixed-up for him; he turned round to reassure himself if it was oats at all that was growing in the field. Oats? What made him think it was oats? There was the hay yellowing nicely in the swathe and Maire and Mick and Tom turning its backside to the sun.

"It'll be in fine fettle against evening" he thought, looking up at the sun that had absorbed the air in its fire, "and fit for tramping surely to-morrow."

He got up to resume his share of the labour, brushing away imaginary crumbs of luncheon from his lap. He would have liked to laze there another little bit for he felt very tired, but the work must be done. He walked out slowly into the field; it was hard walking somehow. What was up with him, at all? What was stopping his feet on him? Who was calling him? Where was Maire and the lads gone? The place was different. Why? Why? Someone was shaking him by the arm, shouting at him. "Walking," "Oats." He caught the words, pondering them to get the meaning. He looked at the speaker vacantly. Maire?—No! Ellen. "Oats," she was saying? Aye! There

was the oats in front of him . . . and beside him. He was waist deep in it. God in heaven ! how did he get in here ?

"Da ! Da ! what's wrong with you, Da ?" Ellen was looking very frightened. He became frightened himself.

"Nothing, a girsha," he managed to say ; and then as if remembering something, "the hens were in the oats,—no, the turkeys."

"But I don't see them ;" she was tearful, urgent.

But he would talk no more. He had looked on the dead, and that boded no one good. He set face for the headland and stumbled on, leaning sometimes—though he was not aware of it—on the arm Ellen was offering. He began to take more stock of things as they approached the house. The sun was blinding him ; it was setting low and fiery. Soon it was hidden behind the house, making a red halo about that dark square shape. There was something strange about everything silhouetted against such shining, even the house that he knew so well was queer, unfamiliar. Why was it so bare-looking ? He would look again later on when he'd rested ; he was very tired now.

He noticed a stock of freshly-cut logs at the gable. There was a lot of sawdust about, too, and brambles and leaves. He was stopping to inquire, but Ellen hurried him on, pulling at him as if she didn't want him to notice it. But he'd look into it quietly, for himself, as soon as he'd rested.

What were they wanting him to go to bed for ? He'd go when it suited himself. Let be now ! He was all right. A little lightness had come over him ; that was all. Better now.

They made him punch and he drank that down to please them ; they made him gruel then and laced it well with poteen ; he drank that, too, to please them. They were good children, glory be to God.

Johnny had to help him up the steep stairs.

"Ye've made me so drunk, now," he said, grinning down at them from halfway up, "that I won't be able to keep me footing in Heaven at all, at all."

Later he heard them whispering outside his door ;

"Twas a bad thing you got Delia to do, a bad trick." . . . That was Ellen's voice.

"You weren't against it." . . . That was Cissie.

"Aye! Aye! To my sorrow. He'll be breaking up on us now."

"Oh! he'll be all right."

"The heart's gone from him. He'll never last after that tree."

"Nonsense."

"Johnny'll kill us if anything happens."

He could keep awake no longer. There was a fine sleep ahead, for with the poteen fingering softly in his head . . . He slept.

He awoke with a startling sense of loss. His head was very clear, very clear and lightsome. The room, too, was very bright; he had never known it so filled with light . . . and so silent. There wasn't a stir at all in the world; not even a sound from Johnny . . . The silence washed over him in pale vague waves; it was drowning him. If he cried now, his voice would be lost in that immensity; hadn't he tried, tried? He must wait, wait; and listen; keep his senses until the voice of the Poplar grew around him like a net and tethered him again with the fields at his feet. The Poplar! . . . He remembered then; and it was as if he were left on some insecure spar of mind that would dissolve at any moment into the tide. He lifted himself up to look at the window, but he lay back again without looking. What would be there now but a bright opening into vacancy, the hole of drowning in a ship. He groped for his Rosary and started a fading, murmuring round. He thought to say the *aves* aloud; but he couldn't. His voice was huddled in a part of his mind already lost to him. And light was pouring into the room, vast vacant tides of moonlight and silence. His beads fell away from him. He was adrift now, hopeless, unclutching. Unlistening—there was nothing to call him back. There was a sound far off . . . over him . . . inside him. He was crying it himself . . . a ghostly, dropping, watery note, losing itself in the vague hollows of air, floating out from him again and again . . . CURLIEU! . . . CURLIEU!

SOME RECENT PLAYS

By Andrew E. Malone

A FEW years ago, during what he said was his twentieth visit to England, Mr. George Jean Nathan summed up his impressions of the London theatre in drastic and pessimistic sentences. "The trouble with your theatre, as I see it," he wrote in the columns of an English popular newspaper for which he was "Guest Critic," "seems to me to be that almost everyone here is interested in it except your dramatists. Your actors, and even one or two of your producers, take it seriously, but your playwrights show a tendency to regard it as a mere out-house, or at best a mere sideshow, of literature." No matter how much of this may be dismissed as mere American "wise-cracking," there is sure to remain a slight residuum of truth.

The words cannot be said to be as close to full truth as they were when they were penned in 1931; but it is nevertheless a fact that the English playwrights of recent years seem to give at least as much consideration to the publication of their plays in book form as they do to the productions on the stage. The movement of the early part of the present century which brought "literature back to the theatre," has been so far successful that it has almost driven drama out of the theatre. It has become customary nowadays for almost all the plays that are staged in England, and particularly in London, to be immediately offered to the reading public in book form; indeed, it often happens that the book is familiar to the reading public long before a manager can be found with the necessary faith and courage to present the play in the theatre. Some plays, too, which achieve little distinction on the stage manage to secure quite a respectable reputation from the literary critics when offered in readable form. There is always the appeal from the audience and the drama critics to the library-subscribers and the literary critics, and in this appeal the playwright generally secures a verdict against audiences and drama critics alike.

So it happens that the box-office successes jostle the failures of the stage on the shelves of the theatrical library, and the published plays of a year make an unusually interesting commentary upon the state of the theatre and the tastes of the chameleon public. One play will run in the theatre for two years, another

for only three nights, and a third will fail to find a producer at all: yet all three will be published in due course, and the verdict of the reader may be utterly opposed to that of the people who risked money to stage or paid money to see performed both the successes and the failures. George Jean Nathan was certainly correct in his judgment that the English playwrights of to-day are consciously, even self-consciously, literary artists first, and playwrights only at moments or by accident.

For about forty years publishers have been issuing plays, ever since Bernard Shaw made his deliberate appeal to the reader against the theatre-manager or controller; and during that period the published form of plays has been steadily shaping itself for the reader rather than the actor or the producer. It is necessary only to read a play published by the late Sir A. W. Pinero and compare it with one by his brother knight, Sir James Barrie, to realise the radical change that has occurred in the mentality of the playwright. It is true that Pinero published his plays; but the published version made no concession to the reader: it was the "script" for actor and producer, not the connected narrative demanded by the reader. But since plays have been published, and since the reading public seems to like plays in volume form, publishers have been catering for that liking with a growing generosity. The reading public may now select plays in collected editions of a playwright's works, such as those of Shaw, Galsworthy, Maugham or Barrie; or a single play to a volume, available in almost every publisher's list; or, now, in omnibus volumes under a variety of styles and titles. That this omnibus style of publication is nothing new will be known to all who are familiar with the history of the drama in Ireland and Great Britain, but it clearly indicates the revival of a critical interest in the drama rather than in the theatre.

Several of these omnibus volumes of plays have been issued during the past few months, and all of them are amazingly good value for the comparatively small price asked for them. The firm of Gollancz has become noted for its volumes of "Famous" plays, which have been published at regular intervals during the past five years. The most recent volume of the series is entitled *Famous Plays of 1933-1934*, and of the six plays which it contains, at least three are unusually distinguished. The

volume includes *Clive of India*, by W. J. Lipscomb and R. J. Minney; *The Wind and the Rain*, by Merton Hodge; *Reunion in Vienna*, by Robert E. Sherwood; *The Laughing Woman*, by Gordon Daviot; *Sixteen*, by Aimee and Philip Stuart, and *The Distaff Side*, by John Van Druten. Four of these plays are the work of reputable and popular playwrights, but it is notable that the two best plays are by hitherto unknown authors. The outstanding plays in the volume are undoubtedly *Clive of India* and *The Wind and the Rain*: the first an historical chronicle and the second a study of medical students in a Scottish university town.

Of the collaborators who made *Clive of India*, one, Mr. Minney, is known as an authority on Indian history; but history alone would never have made this fine play. Without any knowledge of history or any interest in politics, it is impossible not to be captivated by the personal struggle "facing fearful odds" of an heroic man. There is one scene alone which justifies the claim of this play to be entitled "great." It is the scene in which Robert Clive, deserted and thwarted by those who had hitherto been his staunchest supporters, gazes over the Ganges at Plassey. He makes his decision; he must follow his star; even in the face of the monsoon and despite the disapproval of the Governor. Clive is the hero at the cross-roads, knowing that it is the gambler's last throw, taking his life and his reputation in his hands and emerging with the crown of victory. At this moment it may sound ironic to hear Lord Chatham say to Robert Clive, "King George desires me to say that he remembers with gratitude that you have added a great new Dominion to the Empire," but it is a fitting climax to a very memorable play. It is the "chronicle play" at its best, vivid and swift in action.

The Wind and the Rain is slighter stuff, but it is so good that much will almost certainly be heard of its author in the future. Maybe it had its origin in C. K. Munro's *At Mrs. Beam's*, but Mr. Merton Hodge can make a Scottish lodging-house much more lively and infinitely more interesting than can Mr. Munro. The medical students and their companions who assemble in Mrs. McFie's house are a rollicking group, groping after something they dimly glimpse. If they seem muddled it is only because their creator had difficulties with the presentation of their world. He will surmount those difficulties of technique; and

even if he never surmounts them the stage will be much richer for the full-blooded humanity and the spontaneous dialogue which are his.

Robert Sherwood is one of America's most distinguished playwrights, author of the *Road to Rome* which deserved a better fate than it received when J. M. Kerrigan came with it to London, but *Reunion in Vienna* is not his best play. It is highly-coloured sophisticated material which cried so loudly to the mandarins of Hollywood that they heard the cry instantly. It made quite a good film, a better entertainment probably than it ever made on the stage. Nevertheless, it is very attractively written, and its personalities have an air which some stage producers would welcome. It is apparently Mr. Sherwood's opinion that the world is going to pieces and this is his offering in the way of a repairing adhesive. Although it is sticky it is not nearly strong enough for such a grand purpose: his portentous preface may have an altogether better reception as a restorative.

Of the other three plays in this volume, which is published by Gollancz at the low price of 7s. 6d., *Sixteen*, a charming study of girlish adolescence, and *The Distaff Side*, a domestic comedy of three generations of women, deal with living people in attractive situations. Both plays are the work of highly competent authors and will hold attention on the stage. The same cannot be said of Gordon Daviot's *The Laughing Woman*, which is as static as if it dealt with the work rather than the life of a noted sculptor. The play is said to have been suggested by the life of Henri Gaudier and an infinitely better and more lively play could have been made from that brilliantly vivacious personality and his relations with Sophie Brzeska. With her *Richard of Bordeaux*, Gordon Daviot aroused hopes that a notable playwright had made an appearance, but her later plays have done nothing to enhance her reputation; so that it seems as if the historical figure of Richard, rather than the dexterity of the playwright, were responsible for the first success.

Another omnibus entitled *My Best Play* is put forward by Messrs. Faber and Faber, at 8s. 6d., with the approval of the authors for the selection. In this volume, eight prominent playwrights make their own selection of what they believe to be their best play, and even if the opinion of the playgoer does not always coincide with that of the playwright, the book is

undoubtedly excellent value for its price. To get a play each by Clifford Bax, Noel Coward, Clemence Dane, John Van Druten, Somerset Maugham, A. A. Milne, C. K. Munro and Lennox Robinson, finely printed and bound at little more than a shilling a play is more than anyone has a right to ask. The volume is composed of familiar plays: Mr. Clifford Bax selects *The Venetian*, Mr. Coward selects *Hay Fever*, Miss Dane selects *Granite*, Mr. Munro *The Rumour*, Mr. Somerset Maugham *The Circle*, Mr. Lennox Robinson *The Whiteheaded Boy*, Mr. Van Druten *After All*, and Mr. Milne *Success*. All these plays are familiar on the English stage, although only about half of the number has been staged in any Dublin theatre. Clifford Bax is surely worthy of attention by a Dublin producer, although if one only of his plays can be staged a preference might be lodged for *The Rose Without a Thorn*, which should attract Mr. Hilton Edwards.

Another omnibus volume of plays comes from Messrs. Heinemann at 7s. 6d., with six plays by Noel Coward, Clemence Dane, Ferber and Kaufman, Somerset Maugham, J. B. Priestley, and Keith Winter. These are all comparatively recent productions of the London and New York stages, and at least four of them have been very successful in both cities. All are very interesting plays, well designed to hold the attention of audiences, but probably only one of the successful four will be adjudged worthy of more than passing attention, while the two unsuccessful plays are really excellent in almost every way. Somerset Maugham's *Sheppey*, which is believed to be that fine playwright's farewell contribution to the theatre, clearly deserved a better fate than it had in London last year. *Sheppey* is a barber who won a prize in a lottery, and then discovers that all the benevolence of his family evaporated at the prospect of wealth and an easy life. When he proposed to give the money away, or to expend it in charitable works, his family rises in revolt and decides that he is a lunatic. With all the technical and literary skill at his command, Mr. Somerset Maugham exposes the thinness of the veneering Christianity which covers the solid natural greed. The characters are sharply contrasted, and naturally presented, but the total effect of the play is bitter. Probably that bitterness is the explanation of the play's failure in London. Despite that failure *Sheppey* is an uncommonly interesting play dealing with a theme that is prominent in the ordinary life of to-day.

The second box-office failure included in the volume is Clemence Dane's *Wild Decembers*, which had a short run in London about the middle of last year. Its subject is the famous family of Brontë, and the dedication to Katherine Cornell perhaps suggests that famous actress for the central character of Charlotte Brontë. The play is loosely constructed, but ten of its fourteen scenes are placed in Haworth Parsonage between 1842 and 1854, so that demands on stage hands are not so great as might appear on first sight. Of all the plays about the Brontë family at Haworth *Wild Decembers* is easily the best to read, but on the stage its interest is not sufficiently concentrated to make it a success with ordinary audiences. It is a play for the intimate theatre which should commend itself to the smaller repertory companies and to amateur dramatic societies.

In *Design for Living*, Noel Coward again presents one of those amazing feats of stage craft for which he is deservedly famous. The technique of the play is superb, the dialogue crisp and revealing, but the people are not really worthy of the playwright's talents. Given acting of the highest class, *Design for Living* might possibly become interesting, otherwise its little group of "awfully clever" people is utterly boring. The Ferber and Kaufman *Dinner at Eight* is an extremely fascinating experiment which does not quite succeed dramatically. The group of guests which is to dine with Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Jordon in their luxurious New York home is composed of individuals with potentially dramatic personal histories, and it is upon the personal histories that the play is built. For the play is "built" rather than written, and its eleven scenes offer magnificent scope to an enterprising producer. It was the screen and not the stage that made this play well known throughout the world, but it could nevertheless be a very thrilling experience in the theatre. *Dinner at Eight* brings something of the film technique to its making, and its construction should be of the utmost value to all who have ideas which resist the ordinary naturalistic dramatic form. In *Dangerous Corner*, J. B. Priestley also makes use of the "throw-back" device of the cinema. Here the dead past has not quite buried its dead, and both stalk about with very disconcerting effects. Not too well made technically this play betrays a good deal of the novelist in its composition, but its theme is sufficiently attractive, and its characters so vividly portrayed, that its success

in the theatre is almost assured anywhere. With the *Rats of Norway*, a playwright of original and distinctive talent is discovered in Mr. Keith Winter. There are really no Norwegian rats in the play, which is concerned with a preparatory school in Northumberland. This is the outstanding play of the successes of the box-office in this volume. It is a play that will linger long in the memory of all who had the privilege of seeing it at the London Playhouse, where it had the advantage of a magnificent cast. It is nearly as vivid and thrilling to read, but it calls for production as soon as an Irish producer can be found to present it.

Another collection of *Four Plays* by James Bridie has been issued by Messrs. Constable at 7s. 6d., and it is necessary only to give the name of the author to point out how good value the volume is for the money. James Bridie has been entitled "the liveliest mind now writing for the stage," but even if this volume does nothing to support the title it contains much of the greatest interest. Its author has figured with Bernard Shaw as the outstanding dramatist of the Malvern Festival on two occasions as the representative of the drama of to-day, and he is now widely known as the author of "The Switchback," "The Anatomist," "Tobias and the Angel," "Jonah and the Whale," "A Sleeping Clergyman," and other important plays. James Bridie is the pseudonym of a practising physician in Glasgow, by name O. H. Mavor. At one time he criticised music-hall performances for one Glasgow newspaper, and contributed cartoons to another. He began his career as a playwright with short sketches designed for production by the students of Glasgow University, and his first full-length play for the ordinary theatre was staged by Sir Barry Jackson at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre five years ago.

In *Four Plays*, Mr. Bridie has gathered a series of full-length plays which has been offered to Glasgow and Birmingham audiences, but which has not yet achieved the distinction of production in London's West End. One of them, *Colonel Wotherspoon*, was staged in July last by the London Arts Theatre Club, and received very cordially by the critics, but it has not yet received its due recognition from a "commercial" theatre. *Colonel Wotherspoon* is rollicking comedy satirising a "best-seller" novelist named Archie Kelloch, who is the author of a banal novel entitled "Madder Music," which brought wealth and fame

to the house of Kellock. The play is extremely funny in an unpretentious way that is sure to evoke laughter. The Colonel never appears, but is a brooding influence somewhat like the clergyman in *A Sleeping Clergyman*. The Kellock family is delightfully drawn, every one of its members skillfully individualised and differentiated, so that the scene in which the manuscript is read to the family circle in the first act is delicious fun. How this play has escaped London is difficult to discover ; but Mr. Bridie offers a few possible reasons in his humourous preface. The other three plays are of lesser weight although each has something to commend it to producers in search of entertaining comedy.

From Messrs. Jonathan Cape comes another volume in the collected plays of Eugene O'Neill at the usual price of 7s. 6d. The volume contains O'Neill's latest plays, *Ah Wilderness* and *Days Without End*, both of which have been tremendous successes in New York, although neither has yet been seen in London. Dublin is in advance of London in this that the Abbey Theatre has had the courage to be the first theatre outside the United States to stage *Days Without End*. The play was very well received by Dublin audiences, but did not receive the support that its theme would have justified the directors of the Abbey Theatre in expecting. *Days Without End*, which is the second part of a trilogy, suggests that Eugene O'Neill's mind is dissatisfied with the materialist philosophy upon which has hitherto worked and that he is exploring after a spiritual basis for his future work. In this play John Loving finds all that he needs in the Catholic Church. In the first part of the trilogy the hero failed to find satisfaction in the machine, but it will be necessary to see the final part of the work before reaching any conclusive decision. *Ah, Wilderness* is comedy that demonstrates the possession of a sense of humour usually denied to Eugene O'Neill. The Miller family in the Connecticut of 1906 is all sheer fun, so that young Richard's adventures in radicalism, calf-love and saloon bars make comedy of the richest kind. It is easy to understand why *Ah, Wilderness* was the great success of New York's theatrical season ; it is at the same time an escape from the "depression" of to-day, and a laugh at the "good old times" of 1906. Nothing more truly entertaining has been written by Eugene O'Neill since the charming *Beyond the Horizon* fifteen years ago.

The famous German dramatist, Ernst Toller, is represented

by *The Blind Goddess*, published by The Bodley Head at 3s. 6d. In this play, Toller departs from the "expressionism" of his more remarkable plays and uses the naturalistic method. While no one will think *The Blind Goddess* as good or as significant as *Masses and Man*, or *The Machine Wreckers*, it is still a very powerful play which should act very well. Taking the case of a man whose wife poisons herself because of the presence of another woman in the house, Toller shows how the man and the woman are convicted of murder and imprisoned for several years before the error is rectified. "Words are double-edged and actions ambiguous," one of the characters says in the trial scene, and Toller certainly shows how both may become the instruments of that Blind Goddess, Justice. The case may be exaggerated, but it makes an interesting play.

Rose and Glove, by a new playwright named Hugh Ross Williamson (Chatto & Windus, 3s. 6d.), is yet another effort at the rehabilitation of blackened historical characters. In this case it is Piers Gaveston, who is presented as the friend and counsellor of Edward II. of England. Gaveston is presented by Mr. Williamson as the real friend of the king, and not as his evil genius as Marlowe assumed and historians assert. He is here presented in a lively and credible manner, so that whether history is falsified or not matters but little. What does matter quite a lot is that in making Gaveston lively, Mr. Williamson overshadows all the other characters, so that the play is peopled by one real character and a number of ghosts. *Rose and Glove* would have been a glorious play for the actor-manager of thirty years ago—a Beerbohm Tree or even a Henry Irving—to display his histrionic genius.

Several plays by Irish authors have been published recently, including one by Lennox Robinson, one by Brinsley MacNamara, one by Lord Longford, one by John Guinan, and one by Paul Vincent Carroll. When Lennox Robinson's *Drama at Inish* was transferred to London with practically its entire Abbey Theatre cast, its title was changed to *Is Life Worth Living?* (Macmillan, 3s. 6d.), which seems a silly title, and one that obscures and distorts the theme of the play. As produced at the Abbey Theatre, the satire did not point to the unnerving works of Ibsen, Strindberg, Tolstoy and Chekov, but rather to some aspects of contemporary Irish life. The original title fitted that satire like a glove—the

newer title throws the whole play out of focus. The play shows the effects of certain masterpieces of the European drama upon people in a somewhat remote Irish watering-place, so that they are glad to welcome the coming of the circus as a happy release. It is one of Lennox Robinson's more light-hearted efforts which seems destined for popularity. It is very witty, and its satire bites deeply with every line. Brinsley MacNamara's *Margaret Gillan* (Allen & Unwin, 3s. 6d.), has been awarded the Casement Prize for the best play of its year by the Irish Academy of Letters. This tragic drama of conflict between spiritual and carnal love moves on a very high plane to a climax that is as powerful as any in the modern drama. It is beautifully written, with rich characterisation and flowing dialogue, and is easily the best play that Brinsley MacNamara has yet written. Essentially Irish in its people and its atmosphere, *Margaret Gillan* is universal in its story and in its appeal, so that it will be readily understood anywhere. The Earl of Longford's portrayal of Swift as an Irish patriot, which was staged by the Gate Theatre last year, is now available in printed form (Hodges, Figgis, Dublin, 1s. 6d.), and should be very popular. *Yahoo* is two acts of a fine play, in which the third act might also have been masterly had the author not succumbed to the comparatively easy method of satirising the present through Swift's delirium. It may be suggested that even in delirium Swift's mind would not have jumped forward in prophetic vision, but would rather have been peopled by the figures from *Gulliver's Travels* which had so shortly before been its inhabitants. The third act is inconsequent and incoherent because of that forward jump; not because of the change in dramatic method adopted by the author. The change from strict naturalism to expressionism is triumphantly justified in the theatre; but it would have been more strictly connected with what had preceded it in the play had Swift's growing delirium been projected through the people of Liliput instead of the people of contemporary Dublin. *Yahoo* is, however, a most intensely interesting play, filled at the same time with fine achievement and great promise for the future of its author as a playwright. In it Lord Longford has shown that he can use both the realistic and expressionistic methods with equal facility; and has demonstrated, furthermore, that he can combine the two with great dexterity.

The name of John Guinan has been unwarrantably permitted to fall from the familiar place it once held in the repertory of the Abbey Theatre, so it is well that the public should be reminded that twenty years ago his first play was staged there. In more recent times he became known as the author of that fine one-act play, *Black Oliver*, and the mystical *The Rune of Healing*, but an earlier generation of playgoers knew him as the author of *The Cuckoo's Nest* which is now available in printed form (Gill, Dublin, 2s. 6d.), and which might be revived at the Abbey Theatre in these lean times. The number of good new plays is not now so great that this play can be neglected with impunity, and from the firmness of its characterisation, the closeness of its construction, and the naturalness of its dialogue, it suggests success in the theatre. Since its first production, *The Cuckoo's Nest* has been extensively revised and re-written, so that it is now excellent entertainment which can be as heartily commended to the attention of the Abbey Theatre as to the numerous amateur dramatic societies in all parts of Ireland.

The play with which John Vincent Carroll won a prize in the Abbey Theatre Play Competition is also now available in book form (Rich & Cowan, 1s. 6d.). *Things that are Caesar's* is one of the most powerful plays staged by the Abbey Theatre for many years, and even if some people regard it as "unpleasant" that is merely an adaptation of the word once used to label some of his plays by Bernard Shaw. The struggle between Peter Hardy, publican and dreamer, and his hard-fisted wife for the control of their daughter is one that will hold the attention of any audience in any theatre. Family groups, even in Ireland, are not always as pleasant as they might, or ought to be, and that assembled by Mr. Carroll in the bar-parlour, Dundalk, if not edifying, is certainly funny. But ultimately it is the theme and the excellence of the characterisation that will keep this fine play alive in the Irish theatre. Parents in all countries, as is probably natural to the status of parenthood, will contend for the minds and bodies of their children; each believing that he or she alone has the complete philosophy of life. Peter Hardy would have his daughter free in body and mind, without fears or inhibitions of any description; while to his wife, marriage to a loutish man with money was all that her philosophy contained. The weakness of the play is in making the chief protagonist, Peter

Hardy, a man whose heart was weak so that the end comes with death from disease and the struggle is unresolved. This play raised high hopes that its author would contribute many excellent plays to the Irish theatre, but his long silence since *Things that are Ceasar's* is not calculated to keep such hopes strongly living. Something is expected soon to confirm the high hopes of a year ago.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

By M. J. MacManus.

NEW PATHS FOR COLLECTORS.

THE essays in this book, the work of writers each of whom is a specialist in his own particular sphere, are an entertaining mixture of bibliography and literary and art criticism. They also represent the setting up of signposts on roads over which few collectors have hitherto travelled but which, thanks to the stimulus of this book and of the infectious nature of the enthusiasm of the writers, may shortly become somewhat congested. It may be argued, and with some point, that the urge to collect should be a spontaneous thing and its direction entirely a matter of personal taste; nevertheless, even if this be conceded, it must be allowed that there are a great number of bibliophiles who become collectors by accident or who, at the outset have no very definite goal in mind. Pioneers are few, and even Columbus carried a chart.

There is, then, very good reason for welcoming the present volume. Apart entirely from its pioneering aspect, it contains a vast amount of incidental facts which cannot but prove useful to the collector who regards his hobby as something more than a desultory pastime. Mr. Muir's essay, for example, "Ignoring the Flag," not only discusses with clarity and force the question of what to collect—the native or the foreign product (when the latter claims priority)—but also deals as fully as his space permits with the question of literary piracy and the whole tangled skein of Anglo-American copyright relations. And Mr. Michael Sadleir, dealing with that Victorian literary phenomenon, the "yellow-back," finds space to cover in concise, but masterly fashion, the whole subject of cheap "series" book-production in the nineteenth century. His essay is a miracle of condensation and lucid exposition. The editor, Mr. Carter, writing with all the authority of a bibliographer and collector, brings us bang up-to-date with his study of the detective story on its historical and bibliographical side. Distinguishing sharply between the "thriller" and the detective story proper, he guides the would-be collector with skill and ease across territory very little explored, of which the chronological frontiers are the years 1856 and 1934. Mr. Graham Pollard writes entertainingly on the desirability of collecting fiction in serial form, and joins issue with Mr. Muir regarding some of his definitions; Mr. Thomas Balston, in his essay on English Book Illustration of the last two decades of the last century, is informative about the school of artist-craftsmen who followed the woodcut artists of the sixties, and rightly enthusiastic about such lovely productions of the nineties as the Cranford series. Other interesting essays in a very delightful book are those by Mr. C. B. Oldham on "Musical First Editions," Mr. P. H. Muir on "War Books," Mr. David Randall on modern "American First Editions," and—a very stimulating piece of work—Mr. J. T. Winterich on "The Expansion of an Author-Collection."

NEW PATHS IN BOOK COLLECTING. Edited by John Carter. (Constable, 10s. net).

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF GEORGE BERKELEY.

A BIBLIOGRAPHY of Berkeley has been so long overdue that its appearance is doubly welcome. Berkeley's genius was so many-sided that his writings appeal to people of very different shades of thought. He wins respect of the

highest order from scholars as mathematician and philosopher, and the affectionate regard of the general reader as a delightful man of letters.

Professor Jessop's bibliography is the result of a vast amount of labour and of careful, painstaking research. There is scarcely a book in his list—and there are five hundred and seventeen of them—which he has not examined personally. All the "Collected Editions" are there, ranging in date from 1784 to 1929; all the first editions are there, from the first obscure mathematical treatise published in Dublin in 1707 to a sermon printed for the first time by Professor Luce from the original manuscript in 1932; besides these, there are lists of later editions, of translations, of works on Berkeley, and of spurious publications.

From the point of view of scope and completeness, then, no one is likely to quarrel with Professor Jessop's work. Yet to many, whose approach to Berkeley is not purely one of scholarship, it will come as a disappointment. Collectors of the first editions—and they are a numerous and growing body—will find it particularly unsatisfying, and the same applies, in a lesser degree, to librarians. For a reason not easy to discover, Professor Jessop has totally disregarded modern bibliographical technique, using old-fashioned methods throughout, and making little or no concession to the requirements of the collector.

In an up-to-date bibliography the title-pages of, at least, first editions are transcribed in full, divisional strokes being used to mark line-readings; the pagination is given in every case; signatures are noted and the presence or absence of half-titles; the size of the book is stated approximately; advertisement leaves are described wherever present. The collector will look in vain for any of these things in the present volume; he will not even find the name of the printer to help him in his work of identification. The omission of such bibliographical essentials is a matter of surprise and regret, and cannot but take away from the value of the book. Their inclusion, which would only have entailed a small additional amount of labour of the mechanical sort, would have made a world of difference.

Having said so much, let due praise be given to the many splendid qualities of Professor Jessop's work. He seems to have neglected nothing and to have tracked down almost every book which has the name of George Berkeley on the title. The only edition of importance which he does not record is the 1736 London-printed edition of the *Querist*, which claims to be "now first reprinted from the Irish edition." There is also, I believe, a Cork edition, dated 1749, of a *A word to the Wise*, which is not mentioned, and which might possibly prove to be the first edition of that interesting little pamphlet.

There is an Inventory, as an appendix to the bibliography, by Professor Luce of T.C.D. of the manuscript remains and autograph letters of Berkeley, which is a model of what such things should be.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF GEORGE BERKELEY. By T. E. Jessop, M.A. (Oxford University Press).

MORE "POINTS."

"Points" are at once the bane and the fascination of modern book-collecting, or, perhaps, I should say, of the collecting of modern books. Nowadays it seems the exception rather than the rule to find a book which presents no problem of identification in a first edition. "First edition, first issue" is becoming a more and more frequent description in the bookseller's catalogues.

There is probably nobody living who knows more about the points which distinguish the first issues of modern books than Mr. P. H. Muir, and his second volume in the now well-known *Bibliographia* series of Messrs. Constable ranges widely over the authors of the last few decades. In the case of eight writers—Baron Corvo, Logan Pearsall Smith, W. W. Jacobs, Edmund Blunden, James Bridie, Lytton Strachey, David Garnett, and John Cowper Powys—full bibliographical check-lists are given, in some of which Mr. Muir has had the assistance of the authors themselves and in others that of experts. Mr. Sadleir's check-list of the first editions of James Bridie, the Scottish playwright, is particularly interesting as revealing the problems with which modern publishing can confront a bibliographer. Irish collectors will note that two issues of the first edition of James Stephens' *Demi-Gods* are here recorded for the first time, the distinguishing points being the perpendicular pattern of the binding cloth and the absence of a half-title in the second issue.

The chapter on modern bibliographies is timely, and Mr. Muir has some caustic things to say about the many amateurs who, without the necessary equipment, have produced compilations which are merely stumbling-blocks in the path of the scientific bibliographer. "Publishers," he says, "should be made to realise that the publication of a bibliography carries with it an implied guarantee that its contents are trustworthy and reasonably accurate." Of the eighty odd bibliographies listed, about twenty are dismissed as useless. The honesty of Mr. Muir's criticism may be from the following reference to his own early bibliography of Maurice Hewlitt: "Even with the four-page corrigenda issued later, this is a poor and inadequate work." A generous tribute is paid to the careful and painstaking work which characterises the short bibliographies done by Mr. P. S. O'Hegarty for the *Dublin Magazine*.

Other chapters in Mr. Muir's book are devoted to such things as modern bibliographical terms and definitions, genuine and spurious "points," and—a particularly interesting chapter written with inside knowledge—the "Rare Book Ramp." The book is excellently illustrated with seven plates in collotype, and six facsimiles in line, but the vivid green paper on which it is printed may not be to everybody's taste.

POINTS: SECOND SERIES. By P. H. Muir. (Constable, 20s. net.).

THE BOOK CRAFTSMAN.

Mr. James Guthrie, of Pear Tree Press fame, has had the happy thought of issuing a new quarterly dedicated to the cause of fine printing. *The Book Craftsman* should be assured of a cordial welcome, and the first number which contains the substance of a lecture—largely of an autobiographical character—delivered by Mr. Guthrie himself on "The Hand Printer and his Work," augurs well for the future of his enterprise. One may deprecate any sharp division between printing and "fine" printing, but there can be no doubt that hand-printing stands somewhat apart; there is a certain aloofness that springs from the pride of conscious craftsmanship. The "fair page" of this new product of the Pear Tree Press is a sufficient proof that Mr. Guthrie is a true craftsman indeed.

THE BOOK CRAFTSMAN. Number One. (Pear Tree Press, Flansham, Sussex. 2s. 6d.).

BOOK REVIEWS

A FIRST BOOK OF IRISH LITERATURE. From the Earliest Times to the Present Day. By A. de Blacam. Talbot Press. 4s. 6d.

There are two very satisfactory things to be said about this book. The first is that Mr. de Blacam's definition of Irish literature is literature written by Irishmen. He throws his net very wide, including not alone well-known writers like Berkeley and Swift, but little-known writers like Lodovick Barry and Henry Brooke. It is true that he subdivides his writers into Hiberno-Latin, Gaelic, and Anglo-Irish, and the subdivision may stand as a mode of classification which everybody interested in Irish literature may accept, while not necessarily accepting these divisions as anything more than a convenient classification of branches of a main stem. The second is that it is a competent and, with the reservation which will hereafter appear, a delightful book. It is a handbook and a compilation, but it is obviously the work of a man with a feeling for literature, with a knowledge of his material, with a capacity for a clear ordering of it, and with an admirable deftness in the general arrangement—in a word the work not merely of a critic but of a stylist—so that it stands out as more than a handbook. There is a life in it which no mere handbook has, and it will prove an indispensable book to anybody interested in this country's literature.

In his consideration, however, of the Anglo-Irish writers, Mr. de Blacam falls into a pitfall. He knows, no man with his knowledge and gifts can help knowing, that literature, like the wind, "bloweth where it listeth," and can neither be "cribbed, cabined, nor confined." Yet he attempts to confine it within the bounds of an arbitrary framework. He finds in Swift, Berkeley, Wilde, Shaw, Yeats, certain qualities which are not, in his opinion, the qualities of the Gael, and therefore he declines to give them their full value as literature. They are Irish, they are world-famous, they have stood the test of time, but their work does not conform to the arbitrary and narrow framework within which his theory must confine his writers, and therefore he is constrained to say things about them like these :

(a) *Of Mr. Yeats* : " He will live by a number of delicate lyrics and his best, brief, poetic plays. His idiosyncratic temperament has withdrawn him from the great central themes on which high literature must rest."

Who would think, on reading this, that Mr. Yeats was the first living poet, of so high an accomplishment that it dazzles. No poet that I know of has so high a general level, nor has any great poet developed and evolved as he has. All the great poets have tailed off in middle and old age. Mr. Yeats alone in old age is still a great poet. Changing his style in middle age, not artificially as the result proves but to suit the changed mood of his genius, he produces in his old age poetry as fresh and as great as his early poetry. No better book of poetry than the *Winding Stair*, published in his 68th year, has been published in a hundred years.

(b) *Of Synge* : " Even *Riders to the Sea*, an impressive fragment, fails because its dialogue, an artificial mosaic of folk phrases, lacks the simplicity of reality, and jars upon the Irish ear." I do not know exactly what this means. I suspect that it is mere verbiage, spun out by Mr. de Blacam with groans and sweat, after a night spent with a large pot of coffee and a supply of wet towels, in the endeavour to say something and at the same time say nothing.

Literature is composed of reality, a little, and of imagination and sympathy, a great deal. A coroner's inquest, a verbatim report of a police court proceeding, are full of reality and of simplicity, but they are entirely without imagination, and are not literature. Life is not literature. It has to be transmuted and arranged by the genius of the artist. In dramatic literature especially, there has to be selection and compression of material to a high degree—*Riders to the Sea* is a tragedy in which the story, the atmosphere, and the dialogue are welded together by triumphant genius to produce one of the most perfect pieces of dramatic literature in the world.

(c) *Of Shaw*: "In a few years, from being in all men's mouths, he may be forgotten, save for two or three comedies and the heretical (but serious), *Saint Joan*. Shaw was a leader in the new immodesty of the stage, and sometimes writes black paganism."

You would never imagine from that that Mr. Shaw is not alone the greatest living dramatist, but the greatest intellect which is expressing itself in literature. Yet Mr. de Blacam writes what he knows is nonsense about him, because he cannot fit him into his little framework. It's no use trying to label literature as "pagan," or "immodest." The last is grotesque, and as to the first, Plato was a pagan—and these narrownesses and isms have nothing to do with either nationality or literature.

Mr. de Blacam himself adopts Daniel Corkery's viewpoint, which he states thus, "Mr. Corkery affirms that three great elements are combined in typical Irish literature—nationality, religion and attachment to the land." But he adopts it with a difference. He has a better appreciation of literature than Mr. Corkery, and his temperament is not so arid and hidebound. He has a sense of humour, and laughter is not unknown to him, nor can he wholly free himself from a sneaking affection for what he compels himself to call pagan literature. This business of trying to cramp literature within arbitrary limits, of first getting a theory and then cutting up facts to fit it, is merely a part of the fanatical narrowness which is poisoning social and international relations all the world over. It is as much a sin against the Holy Ghost as any other sort of bigotry, whether it be a campaign against Jew or against Bourgeois, or against Aristocrat or against Capitalist. It is a return to tribal and barbarian conceptions of mankind. In this present instance it leads Mr. de Blacam to the absurdity that Canon Sheehan is a "great Irish novelist." I do not honestly see how this can be seriously urged or seriously maintained. Canon Sheehan is a man of one book, *My New Curate*. It is a good book, with a very limited and narrow background, and a restricted and incomplete outlook. It is not a great book, nor was it succeeded by any book as good as itself by the same author. It is not, broadly speaking, as good a book as, say, Miss Crottie's *The Lost Land*, or William Buckley's *Croppies Lie Down*, or William O'Brien's *When we were Boys*. Nor does the totality of Canon Sheehan's novels seem to me to be as good as that of Jane Barlow or Shan Bullock.

The truth is that this whole business of a selective and cast-iron traditionalism in literature, arising out of a nationalist inferiority complex, is not alone founded upon a complete misconception of the basis of nationality, but is of itself a quagmire. If literature is to be on a strictly traditionalist and authoritative basis, where is it to start from? Mr. Corkery and Mr. de Blacam say

it must be Catholic. Why Catholic? Why must Irish literature have no affiliation going back earlier than the Reformation? Why not Christian? The Irish Catholic and the Irish Protestant Churches both affirm the same origin, both belong to the general Christian body, both claim descent from St. Patrick. But, again, why Christian? If we are to be rigidly nationalist, Chauvinistic, and self-expressive, in proud and lonely self-sufficient intellectual isolation, why not Druidical? Druidism probably came from Gaul, but it is at any rate a Celtic religion. If we are to reject anything which is foreign why not go back to the oldest native religion?

Of the Anglo-Irish writers of the eighteenth century, Mr. de Blacam himself says finely and truly: ". . . an amazing succession of writers who excelled in various fields—the best essayists, novelists, dramatists, political writers, and translators who used the English language in that age. Several of these are acknowledged by the world as figures of the first distinction." But it does not end there. A year or so ago, M. Herriot, then President or Prime Minister of the French Republic, in a public speech said that modern English literature, as known on the continent, consisted practically wholly of Irish writers, And so it does. And what a list of writers of genius—Wilde, Shaw, Yeats, Moore, Synge, Joyce, O'Casey. They are world names, in a sense in which such typically English writers as Hardy and Galsworthy are not. Why should Ireland not take pride in the fact that her sons can use the English language with an intensity that the English themselves cannot equal? We shall use the Irish language with the same intensity some day, when it has been schooled and disciplined into a vehicle suitable to modern expression, as anybody will see who reads *Padraic O Conaire*, who would, I am sure, translate into French, and be understood by the French, much more easily than most contemporary English writers. What we have given to literature in the English language is nothing accidental or transient, but something coming from the genius of the Race, which will go equally to literature in Irish when Irish has been schooled and fashioned to give full expression to the thoughts of what Berkeley called "we Irishmen."

This business of laying down a law, that literature must deal with a, and b, and c, but not with x, or y, or z, is not alone folly, but ostrich-head ignorance. Literature deals with what it chooses, and will continue so to deal. If it is not free its inspiration wilts, its genius vanishes, and it becomes a mechanical formalistic blanketing of the spirit. Ireland, if it is to be worth anything to anybody, will have to embrace every Irishman, every Irish tradition, and every Irish thought. Irish literature will have to include, as well as St. Patrick's Confession and the Munster poets, Berkeley, and Swift, and Shaw, and Yeats, and Wilde, and it will so include.

Those who want to fashionize this Nation—for all this selective and obscurantist narrowness is only Fashionism—seem to me to ignore the plain historical facts about the Nation. "And are not Derry and Enniskillen Ireland's," wrote Mitchel in his earliest writing, the preface to *Aodh O'Neill*, "as well as Benburb and The Yellow Ford? And have not these men and their fathers lived, and worshipped God, and died there? Are not their green graves heaped up there, more generations of them than they have genealogical skill to count?" There is something in Ireland, some friendly genius, something fierce and proud and unpredictable, which makes its own of every "creed and race and clan," and which

works steadily through whatever material is available towards an Irish Nation, not a Gaelic Nation but an Irish Nation, "kindly Irish of the Irish, neither Saxon nor Italian." There is an Irish genius which is above all our quarrels and differences and which heeds them not. It made William Molyneux to base his *Case of Ireland Stated*, not merely upon any act or charter of Kings of England, but also upon the antiquity of Ireland, and the inherent rights of the Irish people, it made Berkeley, at 23, record that he published to see "whether other men have the same thoughts as we Irishmen," it moved Swift to the glorious and unforgettable *Fourth Letter of M. B. Drapier to the whole People of Ireland*. It has given to the work of Irish writers in English its own unmistakable stamp. If anybody cares to consider English colonial and American literature, for instance, he will find an almost complete absence of anything of the sort. Canada and Australia have produced no writer of any consequence. America has produced four: Whitman, Poe, Henry James, and Eugene O'Neill. Of these, the only one in whom any distinctive American spirit is discernible is Whitman, who has had neither predecessor nor successor. Poe had Irish blood in him, Henry James had Irish blood on both sides, and O'Neill is of Irish descent. For the rest, save for local differences, American literature is hardly distinguishable from English.

And, with that, it is a pleasure, finally, to congratulate author and publisher. I have noticed only two misprints. On page 9, line 8, Gaelic should be Gallic. It is obvious to the informed, but it may puzzle the student. On page 224, *The Wild Rose of Lough Gill* is attributed to James Smith. This should be P. G. Smyth.

P. S. O'H.

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THE MODERNIST MOVEMENT IN THE ROMAN CHURCH. Alec. R. Vidler, M.A.
Cambridge University Press. 12s. 6d. net.

This very charming book surveys the whole field of Modernist speculation inside the Roman Communion with a final chapter treating of the same subject as it is found in other Churches. From cover to cover, including the index, it is a volume of 286 pages which we can heartily recommend for its competence, its grace, and its importance. In the Introduction we are warned that it is an error to use the word "speculation," as I have just done, in connexion with Modernism because, "In the Encyclical *Pascendi* an attempt is made to transfer the question with which it deals from the ground of fact to that of speculation. It represents the issues as philosophical. The question between Modernism and the Church is primarily historical; one of knowing, or not knowing, certain facts." Of course, Modernism is, and always was, pure speculation. On many questions of simple fact Modernists have been and still are at variance. From them we learn the astonishing intelligence that a statement may be true for faith though false in fact.

The first portion of the book treats of the Roman Church in the nineteenth century—a story of Liberal beginnings, it was thought, in France, Germany, and even in Italy which enjoyed "one brief spell of sunshine." Newman represents the Liberalism of England. Parts two and three comprise the vital portion

of Father Vidler's book ; for just as Methodism means to many people the names of Wesley and Whitfield, so those of Loisy and Tyrrell have come to be synonymous with Roman Modernism. We cannot, of course, forget those other men of extensive learning and religious zeal whose names would have cast lustre on any progressive movement but are permanently associated with Modernism, justly or otherwise : Mignot, von Hügel, Batiffol, Turmel, Lacroix, Dimnet, and Houtin. Batiffol repudiated all association with these people, but it did not save him from being turned out of the rectorship of the Catholic Institute of Toulouse as a suspect. Louis Duchesne at one period of his career promised to be the leader of the Modernist movement in France, brought Alfred Loisy into it, and ultimately sank to the rear. Duchesne was a shrewd man.

It is a widely discussed point—not neglected in this book—whether Newman's Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine was the begetter of Roman Modernism. Nothing could have been more remotely distant from Newman's purpose than to give the smallest justification for the twisting of his theory to suit the new development. For what after all is Modernism? Let Father Tyrrell answer!—"Roughly speaking, it is a battle between Authority and Liberty; between Dogma and Science." And a Modernist? "A churchman of any sort who believes in the possibility of a synthesis between the essential truth of his religion and the essential truth of modernity." Did Newman stand for that? I think not. And yet when he was living at Neully in the nineties as chaplain of a girl's school, Loisy wrote to von Hügel the following important words which are significant as to the genesis of Modernism: "Il m' est venu à l'esprit que peut-être je pourrais trouver un appui et de bons éléments dans certains écrits de Newman. Je n'en connais aucun. J'ai des extraits d'un livre sur le développement doctrinal où il y a de bons principes." Three months later he is reading Newman with enthusiasm: "the most candid theologian which Holy Church has produced since Origen." In 1902 appeared the work from Loisy's pen which set the Roman Church by the ears—The Gospel and the Church. Towards the end of the following year it was placed on the Index, but the author was not excommunicated until 1908. The old gentleman is now an agnostic and was certainly a potential one before his final apostacy.

George Tyrrell was ordained in 1891. From his appointment to the chair of Philosophy at Stonyhurst, his career is a story of conflict with the authorities of his Order and his Church which ended with his death in 1909. Some of Tyrrell's devotional writings are exceptionally beautiful. The pages, for example, on Sentimentalism in *Lex Credendi* grip one immediately and speak to the heart. Who that has read *External Religion: Its Use and Abuse* can ever forget its moving message! How one longs to have heard him preach! You feel that Loisy could never have written thus. As Father Vidler in the book before us puts it: There is always a prophetic and mystical strain in Tyrrell's writings, while Loisy is par excellence the critic, the savant.

Addressing the same "critic and savant" from Richmond, Yorkshire, in 1902, Tyrrell writes to him about his *Évangile et l'Église*: "As perhaps the only adequate reply to Harmack's *Das Wesen des Christenthums* your book may, I trust, escape the envious attacks of those who keep the key of knowledge, and will neither enter themselves or suffer others to enter." Harmack's book was translated into English under the title *What is Christianity?* and is a standard

summary of liberal Protestantism. Loisy felt that its thesis is historically untrue and that he was the man to refute it. Harmack had appealed to history (p. 6) : to history he should go.

According to Modernist theory built on the critical exegesis of Johannes Weiss and Albert Schweitzer, the general theme of the teaching of Jesus was the kingdom of God. His sayings and parables are only rightly understood as the conception of the kingdom is seen to be eschatological and imminent. His own Messiahship is an integral part of the original gospel. He is the Apocalyptic Son of man who sending forth the twelve says to them, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come (Matt. x. 23). And again, There be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom (Matt. xvi. 28). Schweitzer points out that impatient with the delay in the establishment of this expected kingdom, Jesus went up to Jerusalem and deliberately forced the issue—"the violent take it by force." "The Son of man," he says, "lays hold of the wheel of the world to set it moving on that last revolution which is to bring all ordinary history to a close. It refuses to turn, and He throws Himself upon it. Then it does turn and crushes Him. Instead of bringing in the eschatological conditions He has destroyed them. The wheel rolls onward, and the mangled body of the one immeasurably great Man, who was strong enough to think of Himself as the spiritual ruler of mankind and to bend history to His purpose is hanging upon it still. That is His victory and His reign." The Modernists now ask how did this simple gospel of the Jesus of history about a Messianic kingdom in Judea develop into the world-wide Christian Mystery Religion with its elaborate sacramental system, its impressive ritual, and its formulated dogmas? Alfred Loisy supplies an answer in one of his best books, *Les Mystères Païens et Le Mystère Chrétien*, wherein is carefully sketched an account of the various saviour-gods—Osiris, Attis, Mithra—which were competing with Christianity for the empire of the Mediterranean world: Si Paul a donné au christianisme son rituel de mystère, c'est le quatrième Évangile qui a définitivement construit la personnalité du dieu de ce mystère en expliquant la mission du Christ comme incarnation du Verbe éternel. C'est au mystère chrétien, ce n'est pas à l'Évangile de Jésus que le monde antique s'est converti, ni qu'il aurait pu se convertir. And that is Roman Modernism in a nutshell. The Vatican had no option but to stamp it out.

S. B. CROOKS.

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BEASTS AND SAINTS. Translations by Helen Waddell. Woodcuts by Robert Gibbings. Constable. 5s. net.

A MAD LADY'S GARLAND. Ruth Pitter. The Cresset Press. 3s. 6d. net.

Miss Waddell's book, which is a collection of stories of the relationship between saints and animals, taken from various *Vitae Sanctorum*; and Miss Ruth Pitter's poems, of which many are concerned with animals, together show that mystic and artist alike take much pleasure in the brute creation, with the difference that the saint inclines to influence his stag or fox towards a Christian ethic, while the artist is but the more enthralled at the unimproved completeness

of his hedgehog or jenny wren. As for cruelty neither saint nor poet can lay a finger on any of them, and must regard such horrors as spring traps and fox-hunting as essentially satanic. Miss Waddell says with truth in her preface "For if the dark places of the earth have always been full of the habitation of cruelty, there has always been a spring of mercy in mankind . . . With Christ every beast is wise and every savage creature gentle." Our attitude to animals is significant of our whole attitude to life

"Whatever stands in field or flood
Bird, beast, fish or man,
Mare or stallion, cock or hen,
Stands in God's unchanging eye
In all the vigour of its blood;
In that faith I live or die."

Ancient Irish literature teems with poems and legends of beasts and birds. Mr. Robin Flower has familiarised us with many of them in translations, notably the Scribe's pet cat, Pangur Ban. The last section of this book which derives from the "*Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniæ*" edited by Plumer, relates portions of the histories of St. Ciaran, St. Brendan, St. Kevin and St. Colman. St. Ciaran had a wild boar who helped to build him a little cell in the wilderness, and for disciples Brothers Fox and Badger "who obeyed the Saint in all things as if they had been his monks" although Brer Fox in a moment of original sin "stole the Abbot's shoes and carried them off to his ancient dwelling in the forest intending to chew them there." St. Colman's pet mouse who "by gnawing at his clothes" would wake him up in time, and the little fly who would trot up and down the Codex and keep the Saint's place were he called away, must have been useful pets. Since reading of St. Kevin's good deeds to animals the reviewer's prejudice against that grim if holy personage has entirely vanished. Hitherto regarded as a stern anti-feminist who thought nothing of pushing a poor woman into a lake if she annoyed him, it was soothing to learn that he allowed a black-bird to nest in his outstretched hand, she having laid an egg there. He was too tender hearted to disturb her and must have suffered agonies of cramp before it hatched out. On another occasion when an angel appeared to him at Glendalough, and as a sign of heavenly favour offered to level the hills there "into rich and gentle meadow lands" for the benefit of the monastery, St. Kevin made the following pitiful and courteous reply "I have no wish that the creatures of God should be moved because of me . . . and moreover, all the wild creatures on these mountains are my housemates, gentle and familiar with me, and they would be sad of this that thou hast said."

Miss Waddell has a poet's feeling for prose and those who know her beautiful verse translations from the Latin will not be disappointed in these stories. The wood engravings of Mr. Gibbings make amusing decorations, but are on the whole too superficial to be any match for the more profound implications of the text.

In the poems of Miss Ruth Pitter we get the poet's vision of animals. While identifying herself in imaginative sympathy with her creatures which range from cats to bees, she avails herself of a poet's privilege to imbue them with human passions and speech, as in fairy tales. Her two cat poems "The Kitten"

Eclogue" and "The Matron Cat's Song" are as fine as anything of the sort since Du Bellay wrote his poignant Ode to Belaud, that paragon of pussies

"dout la beauté fut telle,
Qu'elle est digne d'estre immortelle."

If one is moved to delight by the delicious dare-devil jollity of the bold black kitten

("They kept the sooty whelp for fortune's sake
When all my stripy brethren plumed the pail.
Their mice I kill, I stuff me with their tuck,
And no man kicks me lest he spoil his luck.")

one is no less touched by the tragic story of the poor bee whose handsome friend so truly named Astrophel, met his pre-ordained fate through being the successful suitor of a ruthless Queen.

"The enchanter's nightshade and rough bramble-rose
Must yield my food, and this dank covert be
My roof till I am sped, and my fair hope
Him and Parnassus; they who therein dwell
Have loved our race . . . Thither I go
To meet him in the purple, and to hear
As if the golden age were come again,
Blind majesty still singing to the Bee,
Homer and Astrophel in antiphon."

Although this poem is written in a tender elegiac mode, Miss Pitter's style is in the main, classical, polished and witty. She has a gift for pastiche and achieves poems in the manner of Langland in "Timelie Tydings for Loueless Ladies" with the difficult double alliterations in every line, or of the Augustan satirists in "To Nymphs" with an equal virtuosity.

When she casts off her prevalent mood of mock-heroic irony in such a poem as "Fowls Celestial and Terrestrial" there emerges that crystalline lyrical quality which characterises what George Moore so rightly named pure poetry. To quote from so lovely a poem is to break the unity of its perfection. My only justification is the hope that the following lines torn from their context will drive people to buy the book and read the whole:

"The Watery Swan speaks:
All elegy am I and martyrdom,
The sailing song's alternate ebb and flow;
To some high aspiration, and to some
Still chastity that clothes herself in snow:
In the mind's heaven I like an angel go
Down a most silent stream, imagining
Like Narcis that I see my love below;
And mute I am until that death shall bring
A Voice and then that love unspeakable I sing."

The work of this poet bears the impress of no modern literary group or clique. The versatile originality of her mind must excite and refresh all lovers of the Muse. Her book, a charming little quarto is worthily bound and printed by the Cresset Press.

M. GOODEN.

A POET OF HEIGHTS AND DEPTHS.

SUMMIT AND CHASM. By Herbert E. Palmer. Dent. 5s.

To put the matter in the crudest way first, this book is very good value for money. Herbert Palmer has become a figure of importance in contemporary poetry at least since the publication of his *Collected Poems*, though many of us were aware of the evidence before that. Many a less fertile poet has made a "Collected" edition no larger than this new volume, which includes new poems, and also older ones because, as Palmer says in his Preface, he had to exclude some of his best from the *Collected Poems* as they had not appeared in any personal volume.

"Summit and Chasm" is characteristic. It is unmistakably in every page Herbert Palmer's and no other's voice that we hear, and yet the pleasures of his poetry renew constantly our finest pleasures in the past. You never know when his seemingly easy and personal manner is going to overcome you with a conviction of beauty and the urge of profound wisdom. His Ode "In Autumn" begins with a few touches of that "nature" description with which in prose Palmer can make enduring literature, and continues:

Autumn is a brown and yellow time
 Soon after life's prime,
 The time of a knell
 Of everything man loved too well,—
 When from some dim belfry of starshine
 The gold and brassy bells of Change
 Utter mournful ding-dongs
 To the changing sing-songs
 Crying, sighing, where the grasses shone,
 "It is all over,
 The leaping of life is over,
 The cherry and the clover are gone."

With such earth-echoes thronging his tones, the poet comes to tenderness and the contemplation of eternal Death.

There are so many levels of feeling and such a range of imagery and music in this one book that it is very difficult to convey an adequate impression of it in a review. By turns the musical fancy, as in the delightful song of "Christmas"; the angry morality and grimly grotesque images of hate and fear that are peculiarly Palmer's in our time; medieval notes in his Villon strain; and impressive imaginative satire as in "Year 1934 + X," which he describes as "a poem for recital from behind a dark screen." Again, Irish readers should be interested to see how this individual poet treats a theme like "Deidre's Agony." Not Irish, certainly not affectation of Irish. Nor English. Just the savage intelligence of a poet penetrating to elemental passion and the reality behind romantic legend. As I have not spoken of all its virtues yet, I need not trouble here to dwell on a few weaknesses of such a rich book.

R. L. MÉGROZ.

THE NEW BACKGROUND OF SCIENCE. By Sir James Jeans. Second Edition. pp. 312. 7s. 6d net. Cambridge University Press. 1934.

The first edition of this well known work, which has already been reviewed in the pages of this Magazine, was published early in 1933. It was followed exactly a year later by the present edition, in which a certain amount of extra matter has been added and a few revisions made.

That this should have been called for in so short a time is evidence, not only of the distinguished author's remarkable powers of popular exposition in a subject fast becoming more abstruse and difficult for the layman to follow, but also of the astonishing rate at which new discoveries in physical science are being made and new theories developed. But as it happens, it is not the advent, in this intervening period of those recent additions to the sub-atomic family, the neutron and the elusive positron, that is of the most significance here, though the author makes a brief reference to them. Even if still later developments could have been included, his main argument would not have been affected. A point not to be missed however, is a certain direction of emphasis conveyed by Sir James Jeans in prefixing, in several instances, the adjective "statistical" to the word "atom" where, in the first edition he omitted it. It is as though he were taking care to remove the last trace of materiality and objective existence from what were considered, not so long ago, to be the very real and indivisible building bricks of a material universe.

The present day situation has been wittily summed up by Bertrand Russell in a characteristic epigram. Matter, as he observes has become merely "a convenient formula for describing what happens where it isn't." Into this strange world that the physicist of to-day constructs out of mathematical symbols in lieu of any more tangible entity, Sir James Jeans conducts us, and the layman can ask for no more skilful guide. At the same time, it must be admitted that some acquaintance with the rudiments of higher mathematics, whilst not indispensable, will enable him to read this book with greater ease and understanding. By the more serious student also, it will be welcomed. Immersed in the intricacies of matrices and tensors, there is a danger of his not seeing the wood for the trees, and to such this little work should prove extremely stimulating and suggestive, even though he may not necessarily agree with the philosophical conclusions arrived at by the author.

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PHYSICS. By A. S. Eve, F.R.S. The Home University of Modern Knowledge. pp. 257. Price 2s. 6d. net. Thornton Butterworth, Ltd., 1934.

Prof. Eve, in a brief preface to this little work, states that it is "neither textbook nor encyclopædia, but only an attempt to try to answer, in plain words the frequent question—What is Physics all about?"

It might well be said, however, and without implying any adverse criticism, that it is more in fulfilling these first two functions, rather than the one which the author claims for it, that its usefulness really lies.

For Prof. Eve has undoubtedly achieved a remarkable feat of compression. The reader who wishes to refresh his memory on some elementary point in Physics, or who perhaps feels that his understanding and consequent enjoyment of one of the more popular works of Jeans or Eddington would be furthered by a little preliminary study, should find this book extremely helpful.

Written in as bright and interesting a manner as its pemmicanized treatment and necessary inclusion of a certain amount of numerical data permits, this "Physics without Tears," as it might be called, seems to offer an eminently suitable first course in the subject for those students who merely wish to acquire some elementary notions of general science.

It ranges from explanations of the Parallelogram of Forces and the Principle of Archimedes to brief notes on the latest scientific discoveries still making journalistic copy, such as heavy hydrogen, or the most recent additions to the nuclear family, and even induced or artificial radioactivity! There is also included an excellent little section on the physics of the weather.

It is not unlikely, however, that the general reader who is merely asking what Physics is all about, will find even Prof. Eve's little book somewhat too technical. It none the less admirably fills the gap left under its subject in that well known series, "The Home University Library of Modern Knowledge."

B.J.

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RADIO ROUND THE WORLD. By A. W. Haslett. Cambridge Press. 5s. net.

The growth of Radio application has been so rapid, and the possibility of getting results, of sorts, so easy that the majority are unaware of the underlying phenomena.

In this entertaining work the author leads the reader by well directed steps from the threshold to the latest course laid by the industrious workers on this many chambered construction.

The uninitiated in the mysteries of Radio who reads this fascinating book will find he has been carefully catered for, and with average concentration, will have solved the riddle "how the music comes out of that box" before he has read many chapters.

The cause of fading is explained, and why a station may be heard two thousand miles away yet be inaudible at a hundred miles becomes no longer a mystery.

Who could possibly resist the opportunity of learning how the yoke of an egg may be cooked without warming the outer layer? The effect of Sun-spots on Radio has been very fully treated, and as their prominence is likely to increase for some years to come, one would be well advised to prepare for a topic of growing interest.

Here is given the latest word in television development, and collected results of radio application to medical aid will induce a feeling of hope in those who fear the surgeon's knife.

Those already advanced in the science of radio will find a rechauffé well worth perusal.

THE PORTUGUESE PIONEERS. By Edgar Prestage. London: A. & C. Black. 15s. net.

There can be no more stirring chapter in the history of the world than that which describes the activities of the Portuguese pioneers by land and sea during the brief hundred years they lasted. From 1415 to 1515 the Portuguese were supreme as explorers and navigators. The Canaries, Madeira, the Azores, a great portion of Africa, the Cape Verde Islands, North America, Brazil, China, Japan and the spice filled islands of the East Indies, were visited and exploited by the intrepid men of Portugal. Professor Prestage has had no easy task in his research work. It is not to be supposed that such brilliant successes and the great riches that resulted from them did not arouse feelings of jealousy and envy among the rival nations, in England and especially Venice, who saw with bitter feelings her monopoly of the spice trade rapidly going from her. As a direct result of this competition the Portuguese guarded the secrets of their new found trade with the utmost care with the result that this policy of secrecy "not only caused the suppression of historical works, but nautical guides, maps, instructions to navigators and their reports suffered the same fate, so that very few of the early ones have come down to us. Besides his painstaking and absorbing reconstruction of the actual history of the period, Professor Prestage gives us an excellent account of the methods by which these feats of exploration were accomplished. There is a valuable chapter on navigation, ships, seamen and cartography which gives the development of navigation and nautical instruments during the period, and affords a glimpse as well of the difficulties and hardships that resulted from the scanty provisioning and inadequate tonnage of the ships of the time. The period is a great and gorgeous one, full of pomp, adventure and famous deeds, Professor Prestage has done it full justice, and the stern realities of history are presented us set out in fine prose and with an abundance of vivid description.

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MALEKULA. A VANISHING PEOPLE IN THE NEW HEBRIDES. By A. Bernard Deacon, Edited by Camilla H. Wedgwood. London: Routledge. 42s. net.

The tribes who inhabit the New Hebrides are among the most primitive in the world. Also, they are perhaps the most difficult to study from an anthropological point of view. Not only are there a number of tribes in a relatively small space each speaking a different language from the other, but depopulation of the native races has been going on apace and the remnants are rapidly losing all trace of cultures that were highly interesting. Disease, settlements of white men, and the efforts of missionaries are all responsible. To this fascinating and most difficult field came Bernard Deacon in 1926, who, after a brilliant career at Cambridge and a first class in the Anthropological Tripos had been persuaded to undertake the ethnography of Malekula, a large island of the group, which was known to possess an amazingly rich and almost unexplored culture. In this book is gathered together the fruit and notes of his thirteen months work. It is a monument of painstaking industry, an eloquent and heartbreaking token of what Deacon would have accomplished had he been spared. His death from

Blackwater fever at the age of twenty-four was a calamitous loss to science yet even in the few months space allotted to him before his death, he accomplished much. The mass of his papers and material was entrusted to Miss Camilla Wedgwood who has edited the book with great care and success. Though far from complete, it contains an enormous amount of valuable material for the anthropologist. The various tribes are dealt with, their customs, marriage rites, life from the social point of view, rites and rituals all are comprehensively embraced. The work is mapped, excellently illustrated, and a large glossary and a good index make it as complete as possible. Editor and publisher have done their work well.

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ARATOS OF SICYON. By F. W. Walbank. Cambridge University Press. 8s. 6d. net.

Though less interesting than that of Plutarch, Mr. Walbank's life of Aratos of Sicyon is more searching and analytical. He has a great figure to deal with in the astute Greek politician and he treats him with a proper appreciation, though tempered with caution. He weighs his subject's points, good and bad, and those were not a few, and his judgement is always fair and considered. There is no denying the importance of Aratos. For thirty years he was the controlling figure in the Achaean League, was indeed so closely identified with it that it is almost impossible to think of one without the other. His work for his own state and his brilliant *coups* place him on a particular pedestal of his own, while he was unequalled for sheer diplomacy in all his lengthy career. On the other hand, his military tactics are sadly open to criticism. They lacked judgement often and were vacillating to a degree. Even his personal courage is at times questionable. Such disasters as at Caphyae and the rout before Pallantion detract enormously from the lustre of his earlier achievements at Sicyon and Corinth. It may be argued though, that as Mr. Walbank points out, Aratos was first and foremost a diplomatist and that considerations of honour and glory meant little to him. The book is an admirable study of an outstanding and subtle figure of the time and of the difficult and significant period in Greek history with which he is so closely connected.

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THE RISING OF THE MOON, and other Ballads, Songs, and Legends. By John K. Casey (Leo). New Edition. Gill. 2s. 6d.

When I was a very small boy, just beginning to read, the house possessed half-a-dozen books, tattered and torn, but whole. One of them was Mitchel's *Jail Journal*, and the other was this book of Casey's, and they were the two that I never tired of. Until the Cork Free Library opened in 1892, there was hardly a wet day that didn't send me to one of them. A lot of the *Jail Journal* I did not, of course, understand, but every line of Casey's went home, was understood, and was loved. My brother and myself used to sing ourselves to sleep with these

ballads, and I could stand an examination in them to-day. It is a bad ground-work, I suppose, for critical appreciation of a poet, but this is going to be an appreciation mainly.

The Young Irelanders were fortunate in that the bulk of their literature was collected and published in book form, and that their chronicler, Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, lived to a hale, a long, and an honoured old age, an old age spent largely in illuminating the times and the men of Young Ireland. The Fenian Movement has had no chronicler either of itself or of its literature. John O'Leary who could have done it, left it till too late, and D. J. O'Donoghue, who might have collected and revised various articles of his in the *Shamrock* on the Fenian poets, died in his prime. So that the impression prevails that the Fenian poets were rather small beer. Actually they were not. There was no Mangan amongst them, and no Ferguson. But Kickham, and Casey, and J. F. O'Donnell are good poets, and a proper study of the whole period would reveal the poets of that time, on the whole, not unworthy successors to the Young Ireland poets. Casey was, in his short life, the most popular of them and one of the best. His output was large for the short time he wrote, but his best poems are not unworthy to be placed side by side with Kickham's. If, for instance, you met with this, and did not know it was Casey's:—

Tim Maher's gone across the hill,
And keeps a steady eye
Along the road to Wexford town,
For fear of tout or spy . . .
And Maureen has the steel within,
The handles too have come,
So let us raise the sledge on high
And strike the sharp point home.
The boys are bound for Wexford town,
And shortly so shall we,
But now our trade's to make the blade
That sets ould Ireland free.

You might easily think it Kickham's.

There are others—*Carrol Bawn*, *The Reaper of Glanree*, *The Horsemen of Dunrone*, *Donal Kenny*, *Charley Mor O'Donoghue*, and, of course, the *Rising of the Moon*—very simple, tuneful, and very good. They are the ballads of a Poet and of a Fenian. It may be only the old associations, but as I read them the old spell returns and I think them, not alone good, but very good. Verses that I have never forgotten stare at me again out of the printed page, and move me as powerfully as they did forty-five golden years ago. For instance:—

Where is the white house on the hill?
'Twas levelled to the ground
By evil law and ruthless hands,
And bayonets flashing round,
We could not pay "my lord" the rent—
For cold and famine came,
And a hundred roofs as well as mine
Were given to the flame!

And Moran he was far away
 Beyond the western wave,
 And Shaun was standing calmly by
 As silent as the grave;
 And Gracie clasped the olden post
 That stood beside the door,
 Her arms around my swelling neck,
 Till they dragged us from the floor.

I could quote pages and pages. Suffice it to say that besides the ballads there are lyrics and miscellaneous poems and that Casey is a real poet, and one who should be better known. When he died, he was only in his twenty-fourth year.

In the preface to this edition it is stated that Cameron Ferguson & Co., were the first publishers of Casey's poems. That is not so. His first book *A Wreath of Shamrocks*, was published in Dublin, by R. S. McGee, in 1866. It contained the *Rising of the Moon* and some of his best poems. In 1869 Messrs. Cameron Ferguson & Co. published a second collection, which Messrs. Gill have now reprinted. It contains all the 55 poems in the 1866 volume, and 31 additional poems. In 1878 Richard Pigott published *The Reliques of J. K. Casey*, edited by Owen Roe (i.e., Eugene Davis). It contains a large number of poems, none of which are in the previous volumes, and some interesting short essays. Davis states in the introduction that he compiled the book from various periodicals and from manuscripts Casey left behind him. But these poems are distinctly inferior, containing not more than half-a-dozen of real worth. And it is evident that they were either poems which the poet himself had rejected for republication, or first drafts of poems, better versions of which appears on the earlier volumes.

In addition to these volumes, there were, according to Davis, separate prints of these poems, viz. :—

St. Kilian. Issued by the Bishop of Kilmore in circular form, for a Church building fund;

Goldsmith by the Loire. Printed and framed and hung up in the Reading Room at Ballymahon;

The Rising of the Moon. Printed on a sheet and circulated through Longford, Cavan and Westmeath.

I suppose the Ballymahon Reading Room has hardly survived the march of progress. I wonder what happened the framed Goldsmith, and whether any copies of the other poems survive.

Casey also wrote short stories and serials. *Marion, the Story of a Fair Maiden*, ran through Vol. 3 of *The Shamrock*, 1868; *The Green Flag in France* ran through Vols. 4 and 5, 1868-9; and *Ella, the Dancing Girl*, ran through Vols. 5 and 6, 1869. A short serial *Lover and Spy*, in four chapters, "a tale of Fenianism in 1865" runs through Vol. 6 also. And there are odd short stories, and there must be others in other periodicals of the time. *The Green Flag* and *Marion* were reprinted in *St. Patricks*, Vol. 1 (1900), and Vol. 4 (1903), respectively, *The Green Flag*, "revised from the original manuscript by the author's widow, Mary Briscoe Casey," and there are some short stories also, one of which is stated to be "now first published."

The book is well printed, but the cardboard cover will not stand much wear. If it sells, as it should, I would plead with the publishers to bring out an edition in cloth, with a portrait of the author, if one can be found. I am not aware of any portrait or sketch of him in the national journals of the time, but there is almost certain to be something in the newspaper accounts of the funeral in 1870, which was one of the largest ever known in Dublin. His widow lived in Dublin until comparatively recently, only dying in 1909, I think, and it is possible that her manuscripts and papers are extant somewhere.

P. S. O'H.

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THE UKIYOYE PRIMITIVES. By Yone Noguchi. Privately published. 41 Sakurayama. Takano. Tokyo. London Agents: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd. 1933. Price £3 net.

HIROSHIGE. By Yone Noguchi. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. London. E. Weyhe. New York. 1934. Price \$15.00.

Collectors of Japanese colour prints, and all who have come under the spell of that unique, and alas! vanished art, will find in these two handsome volumes by Mr. Yone Noguchi, a welcome addition to the literature on the subject.

The author regretfully admits that the art was for long neglected by connoisseurs in the country of its origin. This applies, perhaps, more particularly to the work of the early masters and founders of the Ukiyoye School, to whom the first of these two books is devoted. When they finally awoke to a real appreciation of it, most of the finest examples were irretrievably lost, having gone to swell the collections of Europe and America. In the last two decades, however, they have done their best to make amends. Not only have many important monographs on the subject appeared in Japan in recent years, but a periodical devoted to the work of the Ukiyoye School has been published in Tokyo since 1920. Also, with the dispersal of some of the great European collections—notably the remarkable one formerly belonging to M. Vever, many rare and valuable prints have found their way back to Japan.

Mr. Noguchi himself, draws entirely from Japanese collections for the very numerous examples with which he illustrates his two volumes, some of these being extremely rare. The small, but important sub-school, the Kaigetsudo group, made very few prints, only one being here represented; some however, of the graceful hand paintings on paper and silk by Ando and his followers have been selected for reproduction. It must be remembered that most of the Ukiyoye artists were painters as well as designers of the wood-cuts by which they are so much better known to the European amateur. Also, though the name of the school, which has been freely translated "Mirror of the Passing World," corresponding roughly to the term, genre painting, thus has reference to the subject depicted, they neither restricted themselves to such subjects—as much of the work of Hokusai and practically all that of Hiroshige proves, nor did the classical schools wholly ignore them. The distinguishing mark of the Ukiyoye School was its style, breaking, as it did, with the centuries old traditions of the aristocratic Tosa and Kano painters.

Of the prints chosen by the author to illustrate his work on the Primitives, the British Museum collection contains but one example. This is an extremely fine proof of the large and interesting print by Okumura Masanobu depicting the interior of the Nakamura theatre at Yedo in 1740, with a scene from a play being enacted on the stage. Apart from their artistic merits these early prints have considerable archaeological value, depicting faithfully, as they do, the manners and changing fashions during a particularly interesting period in the history of Japan—the spacious days of the Tokugawa Shogunate. The passion of the common people for the theatre is well reflected in the countless prints and broad-sheets depicting their favourite actors in different rôles. Amongst the Ukiyoye artists the Torii family, commencing with Kiyonobu I. at the close of the 17th century devoted itself almost exclusively to theatrical prints and posters, and it is interesting to note that they have continued to do so down to the present day, their lineal descendants still designing “kamban” or posters for the Tokyo theatres.

Mr. Noguchi brings expert knowledge, the fruit of painstaking research, to bear on many points of interest to connoisseurs, such as the identification of unsigned works, the dating of others, together with valuable biographical notes on these early masters.

But it is in Hiroshige, to whom the second volume is a tribute, that Mr. Noguchi, as poet, finds the artist most truly after his own heart. This is not the first book he has devoted to him, and as one of the organizers of the memorial exhibition held at Tokyo in 1918 to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of his death, he delivered a glowing panegyric on that occasion on the artist which is reproduced in part in the present work. For there is a poetical quality, rarely attained even by the immortal Hokusai himself, in many of Hiroshige's exquisite “short-hand renderings” of his native countryside, and of his well-loved scenes along the great Tokaido highway.

He infused fresh life into the Ukiyoye School at a period of decline, when both subject and style were becoming too strictly conventionalized, by showing how perfectly the colour print technique could be adapted to landscape. That his charmingly impressionistic, yet faithful portrayal of the country under every aspect, in rain or mist, snow carpeted or bathed in moonlight should have been achieved so successfully within the rigid limitations imposed by his most exacting medium is truly remarkable.

The author has included in this volume altogether one hundred reproductions of this most prolific artist's work, and on each of which he comments appreciatively, but with critical discrimination, for it was admittedly uneven in quality. Two of these examples are reprints executed in wood engraving by S. Watanabe, and of rare beauty—notably the fan-shaped print “Tone River” from the Nakamura Collection. (Pl. 37).

Hiroshige was the last of the great masters of Ukiyoye. Increasing contact with the West and the introduction of aniline dyes in place of the old natural pigments no doubt contributed to final decline of the art. Many delightful colour prints by living artists are, it is true, still to be seen, but generally speaking, as an independent art, where the artists designed to meet a popular demand and expressly for the woodcut, fully taking into consideration the nature of their materials and technique, it may be said to have long disappeared.

Mr. Noguchi's two books are made and printed in Japan, and are attractively bound in the Japanese style, each being enclosed in a neat blue cloth Chitsu case. It must be admitted, however, that in view of their not inconsiderable price, the quality of the reproductions leaves much to be desired. Half-tone blocks, especially with the rather coarse screen that has been employed, and printed on paper with a glossy surface cannot possibly do justice to the peculiar quality and character of Japanese colour prints. Also, the apparent neglect of careful colour filtering has resulted in a marked distortion of relative tone values. Nor are the reproductions by the four colour block process in much better case. It has long been recognized that the only process at all adequate for this purpose, either in colour or in monochrome, is collotype. How effective this can be, those acquainted with the superbly illustrated work on the Ukiyoye artists by Julius Kurth, or the beautifully produced catalogues of the Moslé or the O'Brien Sexton collections, or again, those of the important exhibitions held in Paris in the early years of this century will readily appreciate.

Mr. Noguchi writes in a Japanese-English idiom not without its charm, but which some will, no doubt, find rather tiresome on account of the frequent use of words in a strangely unfamiliar context.

B. L. J.

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PLASTIC REDIRECTIONS IN 20TH CENTURY PAINTING. By James Johnson Sweeney. University of Chicago. 7s. net.

A book on Art should be a work of art in itself. That is its only excuse. It cannot be said that Mr. James Johnson Sweeney has achieved anything of the kind in his *Plastic Redirection in 20th Century Painting*. The title tells us at once that what he has written is intended as a guide book to modern endeavour in painting, and those who have but little or no knowledge of the subject cannot but study his book if they wish to understand something of the causes which have compelled so many painters of this century to seek for some method of expression other than the traditional one of attempting to copy nature in such a way that every one can recognize the objects represented. In Dublin, where art of every kind is so shamefully neglected, and where there is not a single example of any modern picture to be seen, this book is of more than ordinary importance. It should at least convince those thoughtful people who will give it a sympathetic reading that there is something more in these different views than the ill-humour of incompetents about which they grow so angry when from time to time they see a reproduction, or read some semi-humorous abuse about some modern work. Time, as Mr. Sweeney says, does painlessly for us all that which requires an effort when we are face to face with a new expression in art. Mr. Sweeney believes that art should be a vital and stimulating element in our lives: he understands that behind all this striving and uncertainty of the new painters there is the attempt of the artist to assert himself once again as the lord and not the slave of creation.

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THE LIFE OF LORD CARSON. Vol. 2. By Ian Colvin. London: Victor Gollancz, Ltd. 15s. net.

In the first volume of the Life of Lord Carson, Edward Marjoribanks gave us, in a short story form, the most famous of a great lawyer's law court cases up to the time when he devoted his advocacy and energies wholeheartedly to the "Cause," "Movement," or "Question"—whichever we will, according to our personal opinions—and Marjoribanks's pen-pictures, portraying, as they do, the characteristics and personality of his subject, are sounder biography than this, the second, volume which necessarily is devoted, in the main, to Ulster.

This story of "Ulster," like stories of all Revolts, which have been or might have been, is, of course, interesting—extremely interesting ("Intrigue-ing," if allowable, might be applied here in some philological sense!). But so many characters—Cabinet Ministers, Political Leaders, Leaders of the Orange Order and Unionist Clubs—not forgetting the Master Gun Runner, Fred Crawford, whose adventures surely would have been read with delight by the Author of "The Riddle of the Sands"—are prominent in the scenes, that Ian Colvin's book is more a history of events during a decade than the continuation of the life story of a man. Yet, the Movement with all its ramifications was so vast that the author could have prepared and presented this work in no other way.

Sir Edward Carson—he was not elevated to the Peerage until after the conclusion of the events recounted in this "Life"—seldom is off the boards for long, and when not actually in the scene we know he is "behind," or at the "prompt side." At times he is literally on the stage—as at Ipswich, bringing about the defeat of a Member of the Government: at other times he is on the Platform, striving to instil enthusiasm into a placid British electorate, or rousing, and at the same time restraining, his followers in the North of Ireland; or on the floor of the House of Commons, rallying his supporters and goading the Government which is being goaded also—but in another direction—by John Redmond.

Here Mr. Asquith is likened to a rope, "tough and a little slippery," being pulled in a tug-of-war by Carson and Redmond: the old problem of the irresistible force and the immovable object, with Asquith in between, might serve better to describe metaphorically the situations of the three Leaders. In a note, on the dust-jacket, the Publishers invite the reader to consider what might have happened if *The Shot* had not been fired at Sarajevo, because this Life Story of Lord Carson concludes when, as the author puts it, the Germans intervened. Alternatively we may wonder what would have happened if a shot had been fired in Ulster; and we might ask why a shot was not fired there. The reply might sensibly be: "Good organisation, discipline and restraint." Then, if that reply be generally acceptable—and Mr. Colvin's book seems to show that it is—this work may be used anywhere as a safe direction to the technique of preparation for revolt on the grand scale. In any case it is a sound open history of political events in the period, and the inner history of careful and methodical preparation for an eventuality which never occurred—that is if anything ever becomes historical where "William the Third" and "Cromwell" are names still synonymous with politics.

NEW FICTION.

VOYAGE IN THE DARK. By Jean Rhys. Constable, 5s.

THE DEVIL, POOR DEVIL! By Murray Constantine. Boriswood, 7s. 6d.

THE JASMINE FARM. By Elizabeth. Heinemann, 7s. 6d.

GAY CRUSADERS. By Magdalen King-Hall. Peter Davies, 7s. 6d.

Most novels inevitably belong to the fairly comfortable class of fiction. Even if they are loaded with human trouble and tragedy we read with the same polite interest that we accord to other people's misfortunes. Like the children who wish to be reassured after hearing a fairy story that it is only a fairy story, we are, as a rule, sustained by the comfortable conviction that it isn't quite real.

But just occasionally a book occurs which rends this curtain of complacency. Miss Jean Rhys did it in her novel *After Leaving Mr. Mackenzie*. She has done it again in her new book. *Voyage in the Dark* might be described as the awful story of A Fallen Woman, or of A Girl Who Took The Wrong Turning, but it is far removed in treatment from either the censorious Victorian or the music hall and plush Edwardian period. Here is an artist at work on common enough material: a young girl left without any genuine friends in London falls in love with a wealthy and much older man; she becomes his mistress for a short period and then is politely given notice; from this point she drifts and drifts till the final humiliating disaster. The background is that in which landladies loom as dark and important as are policemen to the homeless or criminal; the London of bed-sitting rooms, of "getting-off," of being as "ladylike" as is compatible with the instinct of self-preservation. (Says Anna's friend, Maudie, congratulating her on her male acquisition, "And, my God, you've got a fur coat. Well, if a girl has a lot of good clothes and a fur coat, she has something, there's no getting away from that.")

The tragedy is that Anna is a girl playing a game she is too sensitive to play. She has no defences in a world where defences are everything. She has only her contrasting memories of a childhood in the West Indies where people were kind and easy, not critical and sneering, and it was warm. The cry that comes like a lost child wringing its hands is: "*Everything was always so exactly alike—that was what I could never get used to. And the cold; and the houses all exactly alike, and the streets going north, south, east, west, all exactly alike.*"

There is no stress, no appeal, no exaggeration. Miss Rhys strikes with deadly effect because she has a remarkable sense of selection and of significance. Here is a work of art beautifully proportioned and free from either the vulgarisation of sentimentality or of propaganda. Mostly, as I have suggested, the perceptions of the habitual novel reader are so blunted by a succession of stories which are merely narratives or enlarged and dramatic anecdotes, however excellent, that a novel which is a work of art may go unrecognised. But *Voyage in the Dark* is a work of art, which is to say that it creates life and experience.

It would be too much to say that the other three books on my list are in the same category, but they all make good reading. Mr. Constantine has started off with an excellent inspiration. The Devil is comfortably asleep unaware that his lease of life is getting shorter and shorter so far as the modern world is con-

cerned. If we don't believe a thing it is not so ! The Independent, representing Life, or whatever is outside the machine, or what you will, shakes him from the embroidered pillow made for him by John Milton, and convinces him that it is time to set out into the twentieth century and find another poet to set laurels on his brow. It begins well ; the Devil in the person of a handsome young man about town does not find himself at ease in St. Paul's Cathedral (the Poet he meets later explains, " Really, you shouldn't have gone to St. Paul's. The Dean is a notorious Free Thinker "). But he doesn't fare much better in the Dorset village where the sins committed are done chiefly with an eye on the commandment, " Thou shalt not be found out." However, in this part of the book we are largely occupied by the idyll which occurs between Fenella, the beautiful and wise village girl, and the Poet. The Devil becomes a very pitiful figure yearning vainly after Fenella in the flesh and in his proper person getting weaker and weaker—till finally he flickers out altogether. All he actually does is to inspire the poet to write in the Miltonic manner—but he immediately burns the poem ! One had expected worse things, and, on the whole, I do not think that Mr. Constantine has quite given the Devil his due. But perhaps that opinion is due to the circumstance that one writes rather in the shadow of the Pro-Cathedral than of St. Paul's !

One cannot imagine " Elizabeth " writing anything that is not enchanting and amusing, and her new book does not disillusion us, though it is not, I think, " Elizabeth " at her best. Once again we have her lovely talent for surrounding drama with the detail of awkward everyday life. That is to say the part of everyday life which is concerned with eating too many gooseberries on a hot day, opening a door at an embarrassing moment, making love to people who will give the wrong answers, having one's grandest emotions cramped by not knowing the language or remembering the existence of artificial eyelashes, and so on.

The weakness in the book lies in a certain failure in the fusion of the comedy scenes with the individual characters. We accept the Lady Midhurst who hated other people committing adultery since the indiscretions of her own husband have left her with a passion for continence ; we are not so sure of the Daisy Midhurst who faces herself alone and broken by the threat of scandal approaching her daughter, Terry ; we accept Terry's generous love for the unhappy middle-aged Andrew who saddled with a wife who is lovely but otherwise undesirable, a mother-in-law and " a mother-out-of-law "—as he thinks of Daisy, wishes himself well out of his too romantic situation (" frightful to have four wronged women all present in one's life ") ; but we are not so sure that he lay down and died when the pressure was increased or decreased by discovery. And most of all we do not quite accept " Mumsie," Andrew's magnificent mother-in-law, who should be such a terrifying mixture of worldliness and childishness. Nearly she comes off, but the colours are a little smudged. However, even to say this seems ungrateful towards a book which is a joy to read.

It also seems ungrateful to Miss Magdalen King-Hall to hark back to her " Diary of a Young Lady of Fashion " and observe disparagingly that " Gay Crusaders " lacks that glorious sparkle. For if it were not for delightful memories of the *Young Lady*, we would say that this book is an enjoyable and very competent troubadour story of the days when knights and their squires were bold but human all the same, and fair ladies and their maids-in-waiting beautiful and modest,

but not sickeningly so as in the more hackneyed convention! Miss King-Hall makes us believe that it was all very much as she tells it: dirt and gaiety, boasting, religion and fighting; and behind it all the spirit of quest which is more than the spirit of adventure. The story runs on light feet, never mincingly.

NORAH HOULT.

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ON THE EDGE OF THE STREAM. By Peader O'Donnell. Cape. 7s. 6d.

That it is not the subject but the treatment which counts is one of those partial truisms which are likely to occur to the readers of Mr. Peader O'Donnell's new novel. The story is concerned with the consequences of the return of a rebel to his native village. Phil Timony comes trudging back to Donegal after a sojourn in Scotland and its pagan cities in navy boots and corduroys, conspicuously minus a glittering watch chain and other signs of prosperity. Moreover he doesn't go to Mass; instead he leads a rebellion against the big shopkeepers, the Garveys, and starts a Co-operative store. The townland supports the notion by furtive fits and starts, waiting for a lead. They are afraid of the Garveys—and what will the priest say? The schoolmaster, married to an old sweetheart of Phil's, organises a religious procession, but a bull let out of a field shatters the hoped for moral effect. Then public opinion turns again, for the impious bull dies—and is not that a sign against Phil from on high? But at the last moment wrath swings against the Garveys, for it appears that they have poisoned the bull.

Now it is apparent that after a very slow start this story reads as a comedy, a comedy limited to the dimensions of some exhilarating ripples in a village pond. But one imagines that Mr. O'Donnell had a deeper purpose. There is material here for satire since the implications are tragic. However such implications are lost in a general diffuseness, and from Mr. O'Donnell, in spite of some vivid and excellent writing, the result is disappointing.

N.H.

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MR. JORKENS REMEMBERS AFRICA. By Lord Dunsany. Heinemann. 7s. 6d

These stories by Lord Dunsany are mostly little masterpieces of ingenuity. If every club had a Jorkens there would be queues waiting for admission. It is hard to pick and choose in an exhibition of such dexterous juggling. There is the story of the young and comparatively slim Jorkens escaping from the consequences of an earthquake which isolated him in a prison of cliffs by catching ducks and feeding them on potatoes till, according to his calculations, he had harnessed a fleet sufficient to bear him across to the outer world in safety. There is the story of Jorkens fallen among a unique tribe of cannibals who only killed and boiled—boiled, not roasted—clad in the white man's faultless evening dress, so that Jorkens makes his escape by suggesting that their attire is not faultless

in every respect. There is the story of the victim of a sinister gang and Soviet fury whom the Russians chose to shoot up to the moon, but who, to his own relief, landed in England instead! And a particularly pleasant comment on it all is provided by the occasion when in answer to a very inferior member of the club, Jorkens tells admirably how a wonderful fortune escaped him because he did once tell "the bare truth," as a consequence of uplift due to a wine made of more than nectarines and honey.

N.H.

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THE NOVELS OF ELINOR WYLIE. Martin Secker. 8s. 6d. net.

Elinor Wylie's two eighteenth century novels are probably as fine as anything that has ever been done in this kind of stylised pastiche. The author's knowledge of her period and milieu both in Europe and India, is scholarly in its breadth and accuracy of detail, and in her prose style we get the rare alliance of ironic wit and intense feeling for visual beauty. No admirer of her work needs to be reminded of the sparkling gallery of pictures in these novels; one can never forget such scenes as the first glimpse of Jennifer drooping over the sun-dial, "like a sleepy water sprite," her red-gold curls burnished by the noonday sun; nor the creation from air and fire of the brittle spun-glass beauty of Virginio, by the magician Chastelneuf.

In the two novels of the Romantic period, the underlying scholarship and absorption of the spirit of that age are no less striking. "The Orphan Angel," published in England under the less sentimental title, "Mortal Image," is a fantastic romance of the life of Shelley. "It was to its author a very personal book, for in it she draws at full length the mortal image of that one of the English poets to whom she gave an entire devotion." "Mr. Hodge and Mr. Hazard," is in a sense a sequel to the former novel. It is a symbolic romance of the mind; Mr. Hazard standing for the apparently lost cause of the dead Shelley and Byron, and Mr. Hodge for the oncoming tide of Victorian smugness, and the rising middle class at its worst. It is a strange and compelling book and invaluable to any student of the period. In it there are fewer of the luxuriant purple passages which riot through the earlier works, but beneath the more restrained distinction of style one senses a growing profundity of thought.

Those admirers of Elinor Wylie who do not already possess her books separately should be pleased with this collection in one volume, which is so excellently printed and bound, and so light to handle that it does not deserve to be classed with the many other "omnibus" volumes whose clumsy crowded format only too well merits such a lumbering name.

M. G.

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ROSE CLARENDON OR THE TRIALS OF TRUE LOVE. By a Young Indian Author.
G. Bell and Sons, Ltd. 5s. net.

This parody, if parody it is, is written in the style of the worst imitators of Mrs. Henry Wood. We get pages of lush description interspersed with this sort of conversation.

"Very well then" he said, composing himself as well as he could, "if, this day week you do not pay me a midnight visit, your father will be irretrievably ruined!" "Ruined!" she echoed in mingled incredulity and scorn. "Ruined! and by you! Bah! it makes me laugh. 'We shall see,' he exclaimed in concentrated anger. Then darting on her a look of mingled menace and passion, he hurried along the beach."

This though funny at first, soon palls, and the "young Indian author" appears to have been as much influenced by Hollywood as by the sixpenny romances of the nineties, for his sinister villain constantly utters such expressions as "O.K. Boy" with a startling incongruity. If the novelette is meant to be a parody it is not a particularly brilliant nor consistent one; at its best it could only have approximated to those boring and futile revivals of such melodramas as "Sweeny Todd" and "Maria Marten"; if, on the other hand it is the "Young Indian Author's" first serious literary effort, and there are indications that this is so, in the impassioned and apparently sincere plea for the poor and suffering of India through the mouth of Gobindram the Hindu hero, then we can only regret that he has chosen such ridiculous writers as models. The binding and absurdly flowery type ornaments and initial letters resurrected by Messrs. Bell from Victorian publications in the manner of "The Keepsake" are very pretty, but in themselves hardly justify such a piece of literary affectation.

M. G.

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THE HUGE SHIPWRECK. By Kathleen Freeman. London: J. M. Dent & Co. 1934.

A novel with a distinction all its own—that is the first impression the reader is likely to receive of this Miss Freeman's latest book. She has given us good work before, and characters which linger in the memory; here she presents to us several more women, or rather girls, who compel our attention; Veronica the gay and beautiful whom all her neighbours love but who herself, alas, seems incapable of genuine response until shortly before her end, Sadie the grim who must have what she wants "even though it should be brought to her in a thousand pieces," warm-hearted Cordelia of the short skirt and the pert tongue, above all queer remote sensitive silent Estella Berington, the heroine of the tale, whose shipwreck in love gives the book its title. One need look for no exciting plot from Miss Freeman nor even for much realism or "modernism"; her characters move quietly from well-to-do suburbia to boarding school and finally to Bavaria where Estella, grown up, manages a saw mill for her father and where the tragedy is consummated. Mr. Gerald Gould complains that the girls are odd, "extremely odd," and that their school is so odd as to be incredible. Perhaps; the timetable and discipline of "Broster High School" seem decidedly unconventional sometimes, but it is part of the greatness of Miss Freeman's achievement that no reader will be inclined to give this occasional absence of realism a second thought. His attention will be concentrated on the characters and on the emotional reactions to one another of the little group whose life the author makes us share.

The atmosphere—cultivated, refined, slightly unreal, one would like to say "fastidious"—in which this book is steeped, constitutes one of its chief attractions,

Miss Freeman, like her heroine, is keenly sensitive to beauty in all its forms. The grave reserve and delicate fastidiousness of her style do much to deepen her effects ; like Estella Berington too she often restrains herself almost to the point of self-effacement. This for instance is how we are told of Veronica's death in a motor accident : " She asked me to come later, . . . and we fixed a date. But before that, she was dead. Claudian was driving the car himself, but he was only bruised. He wrote to me afterwards and sent me a miniature. I wished he hadn't. I resented it, you see, that *he* had first claim to be grieved."

Odd or not, here is a book that deserves high praise.

M.F.L.

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THE IRISH BUILDER AND ENGINEER (FORTNIGHTLY). Dublin : The Sackville Press. 3d.

DUBLIN'S WATER AND ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES.—Domestic Economists rule that the first needs which Man must win, or with which he must be provided, are Food, Shelter and Clothing. Another first essential—Water—is freely accepted as granted under modern community conditions, especially in Local Government Areas where it is supplied " on tap " by the responsible Authorities. Yet, what burdens of worries must be borne by Waterworks Engineers during a prolonged spell of drought ! Dublin, like other Municipal Areas, was threatened severely with a shortage of water during the arid summer of this year, and the danger was made more acute by the new housing projects and the recent extension of the City Boundary to embrace what is known as Greater Dublin.

Apart altogether from an abnormally low rainfall in the Vartry and Glenasmole catchment areas, these sources of supply, upon which the City depends now, are inadequate to the requirements of a rapidly increasing population, and the City Engineer favours the construction of an Auxiliary Storage Reservoir at Cloghleagh, in the Ballysmutten catchment area.

Sparseness of water in the far away Shannon area, too, is threatening to cause inconvenience—to put it lightly—in Dublin, where the increasing demands for Electricity are likely to outrun the quantity of supply ; and the Electricity Supply Board, while undertaking to improve and extend the steam-power station in Dublin, has at the same time obtained authority from the *Oireachtas* to expend £700,000 (approximately) on the third stage of the original Shannon Hydro-dynamic Scheme.

The object of the special articles, by " Artifex," in the *Irish Builder and Engineer* (October 6, 1934, and November 17, 1934) is to define the prudence, economy, and expediency of postponing further projected operations on the Shannon, and, without delay, proceeding with the Griffith-Moynihan-Kettle Proposals, which would solve two of Dublin's most pressing problems by providing, from one source, ample storage of potable water and hydro-power for current generation at Poulaphouca, on the Liffey.

Sir John Purser Griffith, M.Inst. C.E., first put forward the joint proposals, in 1932 ; Mr. Michael Moynihan, M.Inst. C.E.I., City Engineer, has pronounced favourably in their favour ; and Mr. L. J. Kettle, M.Inst. C.E., a member of the Electricity Supply Board, has declared that one cubic foot of water stored at Poulaphouca is as good as three cubic feet on the Shannon Storage Area.